



National Institute of Justice

Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Awards for FY 2014

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of Justice*

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TESTING INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

\$45,036,399

Conducting new and innovative pilot programs and evaluating the impact is one of the best ways to see what works to keep schools safer. NIJ is supporting 15 pilot projects in local schools to implement and test innovative programs and strategies in urban and rural settings.

USING RESEARCH TO ASSESS IMPACT

\$18,249,540

Evaluating the effectiveness of current safety programs is a core part of learning what works to make schools safer. NIJ is supporting nine research projects to investigate which school safety programs and interventions are having the most impact.

ENHANCING SCHOOL SAFETY DATA COLLECTION

\$3,550,000

Understanding the safety problems schools face begins with collecting better data. NIJ is working with four federal partners to improve survey and incident level data on school safety at the national level.

REVIEWING CURRENT APPROACHES TO SAFETY

\$2,350,000

Building more knowledge about safe schools starts with a review of what is already known. NIJ is convening stakeholders and reviewing existing technologies and approaches to understand what is currently being done to keep our students safe.

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Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Research Awards Overview

THE GOAL: Build science-based knowledge about the causes of school violence and test innovative approaches.

The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative is a large-scale, integrated research effort that is building knowledge about what works to increase the safety of schools nationwide. It was launched in early 2014 in response to a congressional appropriation of \$75 million. The National Institute of Justice has primary responsibility, but more than 20 federal partners are involved.

The Initiative will achieve its goal by:

- Improving national-level data collection.
- Convening stakeholders to identify and share best practices.
- Conducting innovative research and testing and evaluating pilot projects in school districts.

This document describes the 24 research projects awarded from the two solicitations NIJ issued in 2014:

- “Investigator-Initiated Research: The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative.” NIJ received more than 100 applications from researchers and made nine awards to the highest scoring, and most relevant and rigorous studies.
- “Developing Knowledge About What Works to Make Schools Safe.” NIJ received more than 100 applications from school districts and their research partners and made 15 awards to the highest scoring, most relevant and rigorous studies.

What Will the Initiative Accomplish?

It would take many billions of dollars for the federal government to make a significant impact on school safety by providing funds directly to the

FEDERAL PARTNERS

Department of Justice:

- Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Civil Rights Division
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
- Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention

Department of Education

Department of Homeland Security

- U.S. Secret Service

Department of Health and Human Services:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- National Institute on Drug Abuse
- National Institute of Mental Health
- National Institutes of Health
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

more than 15,000 school districts in the United States. With \$75 million, this Initiative can leverage these funds in a way that makes an enduring contribution to every school in the nation by building knowledge about the most effective and efficient school safety efforts. Schools across the country can then use the information to address their own individual safety needs.

The President and Vice President's gun violence reduction package took steps to keep guns out of potentially dangerous hands. In addition, it recognized that additional actions are needed to make our schools safer. School shootings are rare and often involve unique family and community dynamics. The relative infrequency of school shootings makes it difficult to pinpoint mechanisms that have the greatest nationwide impact. However, research to-date tells us that in addition to keeping guns out of potentially dangerous hands, several related issues may play a significant role in preventing school shootings. These include reductions in bullying and minor assaults, improvements in school climate, the presence of school resource offices and youth courts, access to mental health resources and early identification of children in need of services, and the physical layout and security of school buildings.

Typical school safety interventions include hiring school resource officers and mental health professionals, implementing schoolwide programs that improve climate and culture, and installing technologies, such as security cameras and metal detectors.

Which of these many interventions work best and for which kinds of students and schools? Which are most cost-effective? How do they work in concert with one another? Are there unintended consequences for some of these interventions, and what impact do those consequences have? These are the kinds of questions the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative is trying to answer.

The bottom line: We know a great deal about how to make schools safe in general but very little about the specifics for various settings and populations. With this \$75-million investment, the nation will gain an understanding of school safety that is:

- Scientifically sound.
- Practical.
- Can be easily interpreted and used by schools.

What Are the Dividends?

NIJ and the federal partners believe this investment means that professionals will no longer rely primarily on anecdotal evidence or case studies from one or two schools. They will instead have a greater body of knowledge to help them make decisions about which interventions and programs are most effective — and most cost effective — for their particular school and its challenges.

If a program or technique is shown to have little or no effect, schools could save countless dollars by not investing in it. Or perhaps less expensive interventions are shown to be just as effective as more expensive ones. Moreover, the knowledge that will be gained through these research efforts and pilot projects is durable and will inform school safety efforts for many

years to come as we continue to build upon programs, practices and policies to keep our schools safe.

Learn more at NIJ.gov, keywords: Comprehensive School Safety

Funding From Solicitations

Awardee and Shortened Project Title	Award Amount
Investigator-Initiated Solicitation	
1. Connecticut Office of Policy and Management – School Staff Interactions With Students and Police	\$566,104
2. Center for Court Innovation - Examining School Safety and Positive Climate and Culture	\$629,952
3. WestEd - A Randomized Impact Evaluation of the No Bully System	\$1,497,696
4. WestEd - National Impact Study on the Effectiveness of School-Based Youth Courts	\$1,836,976
5. Westat – A Comprehensive Study of the Presence of Police in Schools	\$1,861,520
6. University of Virginia - Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy	\$2,497,529
7. Virginia Commonwealth University - Olweus Bullying Prevention in Urban Low-Income Schools	\$2,660,933
8. University of Pennsylvania - Space-Time Study of Youth and School Violence	\$3,082,625
9. University of Virginia - School Climate in Maryland Middle Schools Using PBIS	\$3,616,205
Total	\$18,249,540
Developing Knowledge (School District) Solicitation	
1. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction - Wisconsin School Violence and Bullying Prevention Study	\$858,187
2. Puget Sound Educational Service District - Brief Interventions Enhancing School Safety	\$1,475,000
3. Columbus County Schools LEA, NC - Teen Courts for Middle and High School Students	\$1,499,019
4. Baltimore County Public Schools - Comprehensive Emotional and Behavioral Health Model	\$1,965,158
5. Board of Education (Chicago) - Connect and Redirect to Respect Program	\$2,197,178
6. Brevard Public Schools - School Safety and Climate Study	\$2,269,744
7. Chesterfield County School District - Integrative Models: PBIS and Olweus Bullying Prevention	\$2,460,220
8. School District of Pittsburgh - Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities	\$3,021,407
9. Bozeman School District #7 - School and Family Engagement - Trauma Informed (SAFE-TI)	\$3,319,810
10. Central Falls School District - Using Restorative Justice Conferencing	\$3,680,000
11. School District of Palm Beach County - School Safety and Student Performance Partnership	\$3,909,116
12. Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District - Safe Schools Research Initiative	\$4,137,035
13. The School Board of Miami-Dade, FL - Evaluating Campus Shield	\$4,273,799
14. Cincinnati City School District – Walking School Buses and the Good Behavior Game	\$4,971,284
15. Arizona Department of Education - SRO Training to Improve School Climate & Student Safety	\$4,999,442
Total	\$45,036,399

Awards From “Investigator-Initiated Research” Solicitation

Total awards = 9

Total value = \$18,249,540

1. Effective School Staff Interactions With Students and Police: A Training Model

Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

\$566,104

Principal investigator: Ronald Sabatelli, Ph.D., University of Connecticut

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0003

GMS No. 2014-91265-CT-IJ

Teachers, principals and other school staff are often unsure about the best ways to discipline students. This uncertainty can lead to inconsistent, ineffective and discriminatory treatment. The goal of this project, “Effective School Staff Interactions With Students and Police: A Training Model” is to determine best practices in achieving positive disciplinary measures, less juvenile justice system involvement and reduced disparities based on race and ethnicity. A one-day training program will be given to administrators, teachers and support staff (including School Resource Officers and school security) in six middle schools and six high schools in Connecticut. The program — encourages school districts and police departments to work together to achieve consistent, graduated and appropriate responses to student misbehavior, with an eye toward eliminating the “school-to-prison pipeline.” Led by Ronald Sabatelli, Ph.D., with the University of Connecticut, the team will also select 12 schools (the “control” group) based on a host of comparable factors, such as location, size of community, type of school, socioeconomic status of the students, previous training on discipline, and school-police; these control schools will not receive the training. Then, using publicly available data — from 2015 (the year of the training) and two additional, post-training, years), the researchers will perform statistical analyses to determine if the schools that received the training had fewer disciplinary incidents, out-of-school sanctions and referrals to juvenile court than the schools that did not receive the training. The project will also consider disparate disciplinary-treatment issues, based on student race and ethnicity, and will include a qualitative analysis based on focus groups at the schools.

2. Examining School Safety and Positive Climate and Culture: A Comprehensive Study in New York City

Center for Court Innovation

\$629,952

Principal investigator: Michael Rempel

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0001

GMS No. 2014-91352-NY-IJ

Over the past decade, new programs and policies have been developed to address school safety issues, including plans for high-risk schools, school-based police officers and technologies, such as metal detectors, security cameras, automatic door locks and telephones in classrooms. Although intense security policies may yield tangible benefits, they may — if not carefully implemented — also result in a “supervision effect,” in which less serious infractions are over-detected and over-sanctioned, leading to higher rates of suspension and juvenile-justice referrals. Research has shown that students of color, especially black male students, are more likely to be suspended or expelled than white students, leading to phenomena such as a “racial discipline gap” and a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Much of the data related to these and other phenomena have not been rigorously tested. This project, “Examining School Safety and Positive Climate and Culture: A Comprehensive Study in New York City,” is a “what-works” analysis of students that were in grades 7–11 in all of New York City’s middle and high schools (976 schools) during the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years (selected to allow a minimum of two years of follow-up data collection). Led by Michael Rempel, Ph.D., researchers from the Center for Court Innovation — in partnership with the New York City Criminal Justice Agency, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation serving the city’s criminal justice system — will perform a quantitative analysis of neighborhood-, school-, and student-level data to determine what factors improve school safety and academic performance; and, if a student is involved in an incident, what factors reduce future incidents and involvement in the criminal justice system. The researchers will also conduct in-depth case studies — including staff interviews and student/parent focus groups — of five schools that, based on the quantitative analysis, were shown to be the most effective in implementing successful practices and policies.

3. A Randomized Impact Evaluation of the No Bully System

WestEd

\$1,497,696

Principal investigator: Thomas L. Hanson, Ph.D., WestEd

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0007

GMS No. 2014-91339-CA-IJ

Bullying is a widespread problem in U.S. schools. Although it is pervasive across grades, some research has shown that bullying is even more common in elementary schools. Bullying has

negative short- and long-term effects on both the victims and the bullies; a 2002 study, for example, found that approximately two-thirds of school shooters (attempted and completed shooting) had been bullied. Given how widespread bullying is — and how well-known its harmful effects are, on both victim and bully — it is no surprise that, as of 2013, 49 states had laws that require school districts to have anti-bullying policies and programs. One such program is the No Bully System (NBS), a non-punitive approach that guides school leaders and staff through a series of interventions for responding to aggression or harassment (single acts) and bullying (multiple acts), depending upon the severity of the incident. At the core of NBS is the Solution Team, in which a trained adult facilitator (Solution Coach) works with the victim, the bully's followers and the bully's pro-social peers to develop solutions to end the bullying. Although NBS is widely disseminated — with promising evidence regarding its effectiveness — rigorous evaluation of the program is needed. This project, “A Randomized Impact Evaluation of the No Bully System,” is a partnership between WestEd (an educational research, evaluation, development and service organization), No Bully (the developer of the NBS), the Oakland Unified School District, and Dr. David Farrington of Cambridge University. In the first-ever randomized controlled trial of NBS, 24 elementary schools in Oakland (a large urban district in Northern California’s Alameda County where no elementary schools have previously used NBS) will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: the treatment group (where NBS will be implemented) and a wait-listed control group, which, over a two-year period, will conduct business-as-usual. Within each school, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders will complete online surveys. The evaluation will measure key outcomes, including resolution and recurrence of bullying incidents; bullying perpetration and victimization; bystander behavior; and student perceptions of peer support, school safety, and other indicators of school climate.

4. National Impact Study on the Effectiveness of School-Based Youth Courts

WestEd

\$1,836,976

Principal investigator: Anthony Petrosino, Ph.D.

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0010

GMS No. 2014-91370-CA-IJ

Youth court is one of the most common “diversionary” strategies used by schools in the U.S. to hold accountable juveniles who commit less serious offenses — larceny, graffiti, vandalism, minor assault, harassment, alcohol possession, minor drug offenses and truancy — without the stigma of formal school sanctions or involvement in the juvenile justice system. In youth court, peers perform the roles of judge, jury, prosecutor, defender and bailiff — and offenders receive a peer-imposed sentence, usually community service or restitution. Despite the popularity of youth courts, however, the only randomized study of their effectiveness to-date did not look at a school-based model, and the study experienced significant problems with randomization integrity and attrition. In this project, “A National Impact Study on the Effectiveness of School-

Based Youth Courts,” WestEd, a not-for-profit research and services firm — in partnership with Analytica, Inc. and Global Youth Justice — will conduct randomized control trials of the four most common school-based youth court models: school only; school and juvenile justice partnership; school and community partnership; and school, juvenile justice and community partnership. In four sites (one for each model), researchers led by Anthony Petrosino, Ph.D., will randomly assign 250 youth who commit offenses to either attend youth court or to go through business-as-usual procedures. They will collect data (including school and non-school offenses, formal disciplinary actions by the school, attendance, and grade progression) to analyze both the implementation and impact of youth courts. Results of the four-year study — the largest randomized trial of school-based youth courts ever conducted — will guide decisions made by local schools and inform national, state, and local policymakers and practitioners regarding the efficacy of this alternative to formal school and juvenile justice sanctions.

5. Study of Police in Schools

Westat

\$1,861,520

Principal investigator: Denise Gottfredson, Ph.D., University of Maryland

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0006

GMS No. 2014-91299-MD-IJ

Schools have adopted a number of approaches for increasing safety, including the use of controlled access to buildings, security cameras, metal detectors, and the placement of school resource officers (SROs). Using SROs — generally, sworn law enforcement officers — is a costly and widely used practice: the 2009-2010 School Survey on Crime and Safety estimated that 43 percent of public schools have at least one SRO present at least once a week. However, few rigorous studies have evaluated the effectiveness of SROs, including whether there are possible unintended consequences that may harm students, such as increased arrests for disorderly conduct (which might otherwise be handled by a school administrator) or exclusionary disciplinary practices (such as suspensions and expulsions) that disproportionately affect minority youth and youth with disabilities. In this project, “Study of Police in Schools,” Westat, will compare data on 100 public middle and high schools in California and Florida that hired SROs through the Department of Justice’s 2013 COPS Hiring Program to data on 100 similar schools that did not receive COPS grants (or otherwise add SROs). The goal of the three-year study is to determine the effects of an increase in SRO placement on schools, communities and students. Numerous outcomes will be measured, including the SRO approach (and “dose”) used, the effectiveness of SROs and how those effects vary both by student characteristics (including race and ethnicity) and by community and school characteristics. The researchers will also perform a validity study in 16 schools (approximately 200 students) to determine whether the reporting of disciplinary incidents is affected by the increased presence of SROs. The study’s findings have the potential to redefine the role of — and the training requirements for — SROs.

Information from this study will help communities to determine if the placement of SROs in their schools is warranted or if resources could be more profitably invested in alternative approaches.

6. Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy

University of Virginia

\$2,497,529

Principal investigator: Dewey Cornell, Ph.D., University of Virginia

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0004

GMS No. 2014-91278-VA-IJ

Studies by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education have found that student perpetrators of school shootings almost always threatened to carry out an attack, or gave other indications of violent intentions, before the shooting. In fact, many school shootings have been prevented after threats were investigated, which suggests that schools could use threat assessment as a violence prevention strategy. In 2001, researchers at the University of Virginia developed a threat assessment model that uses multidisciplinary school-based teams to investigate and resolve threatening situations, replacing a zero-tolerance approach; six studies of this model showed promising results. Two years later, Virginia became the first state in the nation to mandate threat assessment teams in its 1,900 K-12 public schools. When a promising practice is implemented to scale, however, it is crucial to pay attention to issues such as training and implementation fidelity. This project, "Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy" — led by Dewey Cornell in partnership with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Department of Education — will examine whether the model is a safe and effective strategy for reducing suspensions, including their disproportionate impact on minority students. In the first phase, researchers will conduct a statewide review of threats, including the types of threats made, the demographics of students making them, and the frequency — and type — of threat assessments that are conducted. In Phase 2, there will be a statewide inventory of threat assessment models to determine if different models show different outcomes. Numerous outcomes will be analyzed, including student factors (such as resolving threats without violence and staying in school without suspension) and school factors (such as decreased violence and bullying, improved school climate, and fewer suspensions, especially for disproportionately suspended minority students). Phase 3 is a randomized controlled trial in which outcomes in 50 secondary schools that receive technical assistance using the threat assessment model — including online instruction, a summer training institute, and team consultations for a greater range of disciplinary infractions — are compared to 50 control schools that do not use the threat assessment model.

7. Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Sustainability of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Increasing School Safety for Urban Low-Income Middle Schools

Virginia Commonwealth University

\$2,660,933

Principal investigator: Terri Sullivan, Ph.D.

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0009

GMS No. 2014-91362-VA-IJ

Bullying — which occurs frequently in U.S. schools — puts both the perpetrator and the victim at risk for physical injury, school disengagement and poor academic achievement. It can also lead to disciplinary sanctions, including suspension and expulsion. Because of the high prevalence of bullying and its significant impact, anti-bullying programs are needed, particularly in middle school where bullying occurs more frequently than in high school. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is a comprehensive, school-based program that targets risk factors for bullying behaviors — at individual, classroom and school levels — to prevent violence. Although OBPP is currently implemented in hundreds of schools across the country — and has been designated as “promising” by Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development — few studies have tested its effectiveness in the United States, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas that serve minority students. This project, “Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Sustainability of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Increasing School Safety for Urban Low-Income Middle Schools,” builds on an ongoing evaluation of OBPP conducted by the Virginia Commonwealth University’s Academic Center of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention (VCU-ACE). Although the evaluation is currently funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, that funding will end in 2015 — and this project will allow researchers to collect and analyze data for an additional three years on three urban middle schools (randomly assigned to receive OBPP in three different years) in Richmond, Virginia. The four-year project will also include focus groups with teachers to determine challenges and best practices for implementing the program. Finally, the researchers will perform a cost-benefit analysis, including potential benefits such as decreased disciplinary code violations, absences, juvenile justice involvement, and alternative school placements.

8. Space-Time Study of Youth and School Violence

University of Pennsylvania

\$3,082,625

Principal investigator: Douglas Wiebe, Ph.D.

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0008

GMS No. 2014-91360-PA-IJ

Based on data from the National Electronic Surveillance System All Injury Program, researchers estimate that more than 7 million youth were treated in U.S. emergency departments for

violent injuries sustained at school — and en route to and from — during 2001–2008. To date, most school violence-prevention strategies have not been “targeted”; rather, they are based more broadly on the school environment (such as metal detectors, security cameras and SRO’s). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the locations and times when students are vulnerable to assault as they traverse the landscape of their school days. In this project, “Space Time Study of Youth and School Violence,” researchers will use two innovative methods (case-time-control, first developed in pharmacoepidemiology, and geographic information system (GIS)-assisted interviewing) to determine risk and protective factors for school assault. Led by Douglas Wiebe, Ph.D., the research team will study 200 students (50% male, 50% female, 50% African American, 50% Caucasian or other), between the ages 12–18, who are treated in the emergency departments at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania for an assault-related injury (including from gunshot, fist, stick and knife) that was sustained on school property, on the way to or from school or at a school-sponsored event. The children will be interviewed using portable GIS technology to develop detailed data of how, when, where, and with whom they spent time — indoors during school, and outdoors before and after school —from the time they woke up until the time they were assaulted. Analyzing these data — along with secondary data about weather, streets, buildings and neighborhood populations to determine the students’ ability to see surroundings clearly and the potential for someone to be concealed or hiding nearby — the researchers will determine what individual and environmental factors could, if targeted, lead to the greatest reduction in school assaults.

9. Comprehensive Assessment of School Climate to Improve Safety in Maryland Middle Schools

University of Virginia

\$3,616,205

Principal investigator: Catherine Bradshaw, Ph.D., M.Ed., University of Virginia

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0005

GMS No. 2014-91295-VA-IJ

Research has shown having a positive school climate is a protective factor against negative outcomes such as dropout, absenteeism, truancy, suspension, drug use, and violent and aggressive behavior. A positive school climate refers to the beliefs, values and attitudes — shared by students, teachers and administrators — that set the parameters for behavior that is acceptable in school. Unfortunately, many schools spend money and time reacting to problems by implementing non-evidence-based programs. The goal of this project, “Comprehensive Assessment of School Climate to Improve Safety in Maryland Middle Schools,” is to improve middle school safety. The project is led by the PBIS [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports] Maryland Initiative, a 15-year partnership between the University of Virginia, Johns Hopkins University, Sheppard Pratt Health System, and the Maryland State Department of Education. In the initial phase, the researchers will modify for middle schools a program called

the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3), which is a USDOE-funded program that has been shown, through randomized control trials, to have a significant impact on school safety and climate in high schools. Middle school is a place where bullying and violence increase and student connectedness decreases. In a second, 6-month, phase, the modified MDS3 program will be tested in four “pilot” schools. Finally, the research team — led by Catherine Bradshaw, Ph.D., M.Ed., at the University of Virginia — will conduct a randomized control trial to determine the efficacy of the program in 40 middle schools (grades 6–8) in three diverse Baltimore-area counties. The researchers will analyze outcomes over a three-year period, including whether the MDS3-intervention schools experience fewer behavioral infractions (such as office disciplinary referrals and suspensions) and ethnic disparities; greater school safety (fewer fights, threats of violence and bullying); and better attendance and academic achievement than the control schools, which will continue to operate under normal procedures. Finally, a team of economists will perform cost-benefit analyses, focusing on direct costs (the prevention of medical and crime costs) and indirect costs (such as improved future earnings due to better school retention).

Awards From “Developing Knowledge” Solicitation

Total Awards = 15

Total Value = \$45,036,399

1. Wisconsin School Violence and Bullying Prevention Study

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

\$858,187

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0011

GMS No. 2014-91792-WI-GX

Bullying is a very real, nationwide problem in schools. This project will examine the impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in combination with a comprehensive bullying prevention program on bullying behaviors, other violent acts, and perceptions of school safety among middle schools. The project will compare outcomes to schools with an active PBIS program, but without a concurrent bullying prevention program. Specific outcome measures include bullying (rate and incident), out of school suspensions and expulsions due to violent acts, out of school suspension and expulsions for any reason, and perceptions of school climate. The study holds the potential for far-reaching implications related to violence within the school environment and behavior of youth within and outside of the school environment, school day and school career. By integrating PBIS and bully prevention programs and evaluating the effect on the behaviors of students and the perceptions that come with it, we can better understand the effectiveness of this approach.

2. Brief Interventions Enhancing School Safety

Puget Sound Educational Service District / University of Washington

\$1,475,000

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0013

GMS No. 2014-91806-WA-GX

In light of the need to create safer school settings and alter the school-to-prison trajectories for at-risk students, the purpose of this project is to evaluate a three-step, early warning and intervention process that prioritizes timely identification of students at risk and ongoing matching to effective, brief interventions that meet their individual needs. This early warning and intervention process is designed to shift schools away from disproportionate, reactive and punitive discipline toward a more proactive and positive approach. Specifically, this project will investigate the effects of building capacity within schools to make data-driven decisions surrounding the selection and delivery of evidence-based, brief, relatively low-cost

interventions proven to improve students' mindsets and school belonging. Student mindset and sense of school belonging are two constructs linked to increased school engagement and safety. As the research partner, the University of Washington will conduct a rigorous examination of effectiveness of these processes across the school district of more than 4,600 students. The research will improve the ability of schools to make data-driven decisions surrounding the selection and delivery of evidence-based interventions before students engage in anti-social behavior.

3. Group Randomized Trial of Teen Courts to Address the School-to-Prison Pipeline, Reduce Aggression and Violence, and Enhance School Safety in Middle and High School Students

Columbus County Schools LEA, NC / North Carolina Academic Center for Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention (NC-ACE)

\$1,499,019

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0104

GMS No. 2014-91762-NC-IJ

This project will examine the impact of teen courts on a variety of school safety outcomes, including bullying, aggression, victimization, mental health and reductions in exclusionary discipline. The project will involve the implementation and evaluation of an innovative school safety initiative that includes comprehensive school-based needs assessments (the School Success Profile-Plus student reporting system) and teen courts in schools to emphasize restorative justice, keep first-time offenders out of the juvenile justice system, and reduce the school-to-prison pipeline. As the primary research partner, the North Carolina Academic Center for Youth Violence Prevention will conduct a randomized experimental design in 24 middle schools: 12 test schools (where the intervention will be implemented) and 12 control schools. Student-level data and outcomes within these schools will be tracked and assessed. The goal is to provide evidence on the effectiveness of this popular school safety program and its ability to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline.

4. Promoting School Safety: A Comprehensive Emotional and Behavioral Health Model

Baltimore County Public Schools / University of Maryland, Baltimore

\$1,965,158

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0021

GMS No. 2014-91870-MD-CX

Schools across the country are struggling with how to formulate comprehensive and effective programs to address the mental health needs of students and thereby help preserve school safety. This study will employ a randomized controlled study design involving 44 schools to evaluate the impact of a new comprehensive emotional and behavioral health crisis response

and prevention (EBH-CRP) intervention on school safety outcomes. The EBH-CRP intervention is a comprehensive training, organization and support protocol for school and community stakeholders aimed at increasing school and community competence in responding to and preventing student emotional and behavioral health crises. The intervention uses evidence-based, culturally competent, school-informed strategies that address emotional and behavioral health concerns across a continuum and efficiently coordinates across child-serving systems. This project will build on existing school and community resources to implement a streamlined emotional and behavioral health crisis response and prevention protocol and comprehensive continuum of services, including universal prevention, early identification, assessment and service linkage, crisis response and post-crisis relapse prevention. The research conducted by the University of Maryland at Baltimore will generate evidence about the effectiveness of a large-scale, multifaceted, mental-health-focused intervention.

5. Connect and Redirect to Respect Program

Board of Education – City of Chicago / University of Chicago Crime Lab

\$2,197,178

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0002

GMS No. 2014-91856-IL-CX

Social media is often the first place students turn to post their true feelings and affiliations, which are often kept hidden from parents, teachers and counselors. It is therefore potentially one of the leading sources for information on violent behavior and confrontations occurring between students. Cognizant of the need to address gang activity and violence in and around schools, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) proposes the Connect and Redirect to Respect (CRR) program to a review of social media for potential gang activities. The CRR program will monitor social media to identify students most in need of remediation, link high-risk individuals to the district's Gang School Safety Team (GSST) for intervention, refer students to follow up social-emotional intervention strategies within the school or community, and maintain continual post-intervention follow up to ensure successful outcomes. CPS is partnering with the University of Chicago Crime Lab, which will evaluate the project and examine its implementation in 24 treatment schools and 24 control schools. The project will provide a comprehensive test of a unique crime reduction strategy that takes advantage of the increasingly prominent role of social media in the lives of young people. This approach may eventually serve as a best practice on a national level for disrupting gang activity, curbing youth violence, encouraging behavioral modification and building positive school cultures.

6. School Safety and Climate Study

Brevard Public Schools / University of Central Florida

\$2,269,744

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0014

GMS No. 2014-91818-FL-GX

Previous studies have examined benefits to schools from mental health policies and programs, but relatively few have explored the relationship between mental health services, school climate and school safety. This project will involve training staff (including teachers and school resource officers) in four elementary schools and one junior/senior high school to improve their ability to identify and respond to students in need of enhanced mental health and social services. These services will be made available to approximately 1,000 students with the goal of improving their mental health and behavioral outcomes. The University of Central Florida will work in partnership with the Brevard Public Schools to conduct comprehensive pre-test, post-test assessments and evaluate comparison schools at the student and school levels. The research component of the project will determine the impact the intervention has on a variety of school safety outcomes and climate and culture measures. The project will provide evidence regarding whether mental health trainings and interventions, including the role of youth social workers, can impact positively school safety in a needy jurisdiction.

7. Integrative Models to Improve School Safety: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Chesterfield County School District / Clemson University / University of Oregon

\$2,460,220

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0012

GMS No. 2014-91804-SC-GX

Most of what is known about promoting school safety is based on evaluations of stand-alone interventions. Many schools integrate effective programs, but there has been little systematic assessment of the impact of these integrated approaches. This project will attempt to fill this gap by combining two evidence-based approaches: Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) and subjecting the integrated intervention to a rigorous evaluation. Both approaches target school-, classroom-, student-, family- and community-level risk and protective factors. Although the OBPP has been shown to be effective using quasi-experimental designs, there has been no randomized control trial to evaluate this program in U.S. schools. Many schools appropriately combine SWPBIS and OBPP, and this study will evaluate an integrated SWPBIS/OBPP approach to respond to bullying and school safety issues. Clemson University and the University of Oregon will evaluate the intervention which will involve 16 high schools divided into a control group, a OBPP group, and a SWPBIS/OBPP group. Researchers will follow the impact that these programs have on a large

number of students. The strong three-group random assignment research design will provide better understanding about the effectiveness of the popular Olweus Bullying Prevention Program when it is used alone and in conjunction with the also popular Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support program.

8. Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities

School District of Pittsburgh / RAND Corporation

\$3,021,407

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0020

GMS No. 2014-91873-PA-CX

Discouraged by high rates of misbehavior and high racial disparities in disciplinary actions, support for, and adoption of, Restorative Practices appears to be growing. Restorative Practices involve informal and formal processes to address misconduct, not as a reactive response to crime and other wrongdoing but as a proactive process of building relationships and a sense of community. The purpose and overarching goal of this project, entitled Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities, is to measure the capacity of Restorative Practices to improve the safety and climate in our schools. The project's specific objectives include:

- Improving student and staff perceptions of school safety
- Reducing incidents of juvenile justice involvement, violence and out-of-school suspension
- Reducing racial disparities in suspensions
- Reducing gender-specific disparities in suspensions
- Improving peer-to-peer respect and adherence to rules
- Improving student attendance.

The School District of Pittsburgh is partnering with the RAND Corporation to conduct a comprehensive examination of the intervention through a randomized controlled trial involving 50 schools across the district. The research will provide strong evidence regarding whether a large-scale restorative justice intervention can address discipline and school safety outcomes effectively.

9. School and Family Engagement – Trauma Informed (SAFE-TI)

Bozeman School District #7 / The University of Montana

\$3,319,810

Award No. 2014-MU-MU-0017

GMS No. 2014-91788-MT-GX

While individual and group-based clinical interventions for addressing childhood trauma have been researched in mental health services and some school settings, research is lacking on the implementation of a comprehensive, multi-tiered, trauma-informed approach in schools. We have little evidence about its impact on discipline, recidivism, attendance and academic achievement. This project will examine the impact of just such a large multi-tiered mental health- and trauma-informed interventions (termed SAFE-TI) on a wide variety of mental health and school safety outcomes. The SAFE-TI program involves the tiering of students based on their mental health needs. Six specific mental health- and trauma-informed interventions will be implemented based on these assessments. Students will be randomly assigned at intake to either an immediate intervention group or a three-month waitlist control group. Interventions will be implemented across 11 schools in this largely rural district with a large Native American population of students. Researchers from the University of Montana will provide evidence of the effectiveness of these multi-tiered mental health- and trauma-informed interventions on school safety outcomes. Unique features of the project include its geographic dispersion, rural population, and high Native American population.

10. Using Restorative Justice Conferencing to Enrich School Climate and Improve School Safety

Central Falls School District / The Urban Institute (Justice Policy Center)

\$3,680,000

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0025

GMS No. 2014-91834-RI-CX

Policymakers, educators, and parents alike recognize the negative consequences of punitive and exclusionary school discipline policies and of the disparate application of such policies to minority youth. As a result, there is a renewed interest in alternative approaches to school discipline and safety. Restorative justice conferencing is one such alternative. Restorative justice conferencing sets up an opportunity for a subset of the community (affected parties and their allies) to arrive at the best possible solution for all. Central Falls School District and The Urban Institute will test the impact of this intervention on a high-need population of students in four high schools and two middle schools. The project will use a matched sample design to examine whether this specific restorative justice program can impact positively perceptions of safety and climate and reduce the use of exclusionary and punitive discipline. The findings are

expected to provide strong evidence regarding restorative justice conferencing's impact on school safety in a high-need community.

11. The Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Partnership Research Project

School District of Palm Beach County / Florida State University

\$3,909,116

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0018

GMS No. 2014-91830-FL-GX

There is a need to understand how best to improve school safety, as well as to improve student performance outcomes—including attendance, suspensions, expulsions and grades—and to do so through intervention with both lower risk and higher risk youth. To address this need, the proposed study will expand the pilot school-based intervention developed by the School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) and evaluate it using an experimental design. The SDPBC intervention consists of several components, including a school-based approach to probation and early intervention; a comprehensive, wraparound strategy that emphasizes collaborations among schools, law enforcement, the juvenile court, and service and treatment providers; identification of at-risk youth, assessment of them, development of intervention plans and monitoring of the implementation of these plans, complete with crisis intervention; and the use of several staff positions to implement the intervention. A central premise of the intervention is that improved school safety requires systematic attention both to high-risk and at-risk youth. Florida State University will follow a treatment group of 400 students across four high schools and a matched sample of 400 students without treatment. The unique aspect of this research is that it will provide evidence on the effectiveness of these interventions on a sample of youth who have already engaged in at-risk behavior and who have come to the attention of the criminal justice system.

12. Safe Schools Research Initiative

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District / SRI International

\$4,137,035

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0015

GMS No. 2014-91842-TX-CX

This project will examine school safety interventions in the unique cultural milieu of the Rio Grande Valley, with a largely Hispanic population. The proposed intervention will combine Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with a Blueprint for Violence Prevention Model for Spanish-speaking populations called *Familias Unidas*, which includes family engagement components. As the research partner, SRI International will evaluate the program

in seven randomly selected middle schools and high schools and compare the results with eight control schools. They will use a variety of scales and outcome measures to examine the impact of these interventions on a large number of school safety outcomes. The unique aspects of this research include the geographic location, predominantly Hispanic population, and the relatively low socioeconomic status of the population.

13. Enhancing School Safety Through Digital Intelligence: Evaluating Campus Shield

The School Board of Miami-Dade, FL / WestEd-Atlanta

\$4,273,799

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0019

GMS No. 2014-91843-FL-CX

Like many urban areas, Miami-Dade County faces significant school safety challenges from a wide range of threats, including gangs, serious targeted incidents on school property, bullying and drugs. This project will implement a pilot test and evaluate the effects of an innovative “intelligence fusion center” known as Campus Shield. The goal of Campus Shield is to improve school safety and climate through deployment of a specific data collection, analysis and dissemination system that permits proactive responses to potential threats, both immediate (as in the case of gang activity) and over time (such as deteriorating school climate or escalations in bullying). The Campus Shield intervention also includes access card and security camera installations and linkage to mental health services through access to Mental Health Specialists. As the research partner, WestEd will evaluate the ability of Campus Shield to proactively identify and address school safety threats in 12 experimental schools and compare the results with 12 control schools. The project will provide a rigorous experimental test of the effectiveness of the Campus Shield package on school safety and will contribute knowledge to the field about the impact of such complex interventions.

14. Evaluation of Walking School Bus Programs and the Good Behavior Game

Cincinnati City School District / RAND Corporation

\$4,971,284

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0103

GMS No. 2014-91876-OH-CX

Playgrounds, school buses, pedestrian crossings and routes to school are an often overlooked aspect of the instructional setting. These micro-environments have fewer rules or behavioral expectations, and there is typically little adult representation in such settings. This project seeks to enhance and learn about school safety through adopting the Walking School Bus (WSB), a program that is gaining widespread support from many communities. The WSB is recognized as potentially having multiple benefits, including reducing obesity and pollution, but this is the first

project to focus primarily on the safety aspects of a WSB. The project will combine the WSB with a nationally recognized effective prevention program, the Good Behavior Game (GBG). The core elements of GBG are essential for students at all grade levels, and contribute to the development of protective factors for, and reduction of the risk of, violence, drug use and other deleterious outcomes. Guided by the theory of the WSB, bolstered by GBG, this study will test if the program will reduce exposure to violence and community disorganization, and thereby reduce risk profiles/enhance protective factors for children in at-risk neighborhoods. The research partner, RAND Corporation, will implement a strong randomized interrupted time series design with waitlist controls across 12 schools. The goal is to examine if the interventions improve the safety and well-being of students and have an impact on the overall climate and safety of schools. The project will provide evidence on the effectiveness of these potentially innovative interventions to address safety challenges for students in and around schools and coming and going to school.

15. School Resource Officer Activities and Training to Improve School Climate & Student Safety Outcomes

Arizona Department of Education / University of Arizona

\$4,999,442

Award No. 2014-CK-BX-0016

GMS No. 2014-91874-AZ-CX

Schools have been increasingly hiring School Resource Officers (SROs) over the past 50 years. But there is no empirical data about their effectiveness, and without evidence of their impact, it is extremely difficult to assess costs and benefits. This study is a step towards providing that evidence. The Arizona Department of Education and the University of Arizona will examine the impact and effectiveness of school resource officers who work as partners in a multi-agency team of mental health professionals and who received enhanced SRO training. The project will be implemented in 45 schools across the state of Arizona. Researchers will evaluate the implementation of these officers through a creative design that includes the use of SRO training logs to track specific SRO activities. The researchers will compare the effects of very specific types of SRO activities on a variety of school safety outcomes and across sub-populations of students. This will enable researchers to identify which aspects of the program have the greatest impact and detect specific subgroups for whom the program is most effective. Through this innovative study, researchers will also be able to determine whether the type of training SROs receive makes a difference—that is, the researchers will compare enhanced training to standard training.