

Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)

CAST, Inc.

S411C220169

Circle Up: An Integrated Whole School Model to Address Learners' Social-Emotional and Learning Needs

Applicant Name: CAST, Inc.

Project Title: Circle Up: An Integrated Whole School Model To Address Learners' Social-Emotional And Learning Needs

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 7,850 students

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: 4th and 5th

Your definition of high-need students: Historically underserved students, including Black and Latinx students, students living in poverty, English learners, LGBTQI+ youth, and students with disabilities

Brief description of proposed project, including project activities: The project will develop and test a program to improve student social-emotional learning (SEL) and engagement. Activities include developing models of universally designed learning environments with embedded SEL supports, and protocols to integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS), and Check & Connect (C&C).

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: Objective 1 is to develop a training program and set of materials; Objective 2 is to launch and conduct a pilot study; Objective 3 is to conduct an impact study; and Objective 4 is to disseminate Circle Up resources and findings.

Expected outcomes include student gains in social, emotional, and academic achievement; teacher gains in understanding and supporting student SEL; and school gains in culture and equity, including reducing exclusionary discipline.

Describe how the proposed project is innovative: Circle Up integrates 3 evidence-based practices (UDL, CPS, C&C) into a comprehensive model that promises to “stem the tide” of disengagement before high school. Identify other studies and/practice related to the proposed project: N/A

Proposed implementation sites: Fifteen elementary schools in the Aldine Independent School District.

List all organizations partnering with this project: CAST, Lives in the Balance, the University of Minnesota, Education Development Center, and the Aldine Independent School District.