



*“Building a
Foundation for
Lifelong
Learning”*

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CCPS RECEIVES NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE GRANT

ELKTON (December 6, 2017) - Cecil County Public Schools in partnership with the Center for School Mental Health within the University of Maryland School of Medicine are pleased to announce that they have been awarded a \$3 million grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The grant will be focused on providing behavioral support for students who have experienced various levels of trauma. CCPS is one of twenty awardees across the nation for the 2017 funding cycle from NIJ which totaled \$41 million. There have been only 94 total awards to date since NIJ began these grants in 2014.

“We look forward to being able to provide our staff with evidence-based training in order to support students with emotional and behavioral health needs as well as more effective restorative disciplinary practices,” stated Dr. D’Ette Devine, Superintendent of Schools. “This project has the potential for significant positive impact on student emotional/behavior health, school climate, and school safety in Cecil County, and will have important implications for other school districts in Maryland and around the nation.”

The study’s findings will also guide local police departments and the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) in how best to improve SRO training to serve in schools. A component of the grant is Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers (AMHT-SRO). AMHT-SRO was developed by the National Center for Mental Health and Criminal Justice and is intended to help SROs develop the critical skills and capacity for appropriately responding to the many predictable behavior issues that are typically observed among adolescents with mental health problems. This project will also examine the impact of a promising conflict-resolution strategy that teachers and SROs can use to de-escalate student acting-out behaviors, the Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI). CCPS is fortunate to have an excellent working relationship with law enforcement, including the Cecil County Sheriff’s Office which has four full-time school resource officers who are an integral part of the school community.

Sheriff Scott Adams provided a letter of support for the grant application, stating, “The training that our SROs will receive through this initiative are the most promising approaches available, and we are eager to see the evaluation results, which are likely to be highly relevant to police departments and school systems around the country as they structure their SRO programs for maximum effectiveness.”

Our Mission: to provide an excellent pre-kindergarten through graduation learning experience that enables ALL students to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for lifelong learning and productive citizenship in an ever-changing global society.

Another component of the grant is the incorporation of Support for Students Exposed to Trauma, a 10-week school-based cognitive-behavioral group intervention for students who have been exposed to traumatic events, and have elevated symptoms consistent with PTSD. Other aspects of the grant include developing graduated response systems for student misbehavior, and training for staff focused on de-escalating situations and redirecting students back to engagement in their learning.

Outcomes from the proposed study will provide guidance to schools about which approaches are most effective, and whether there is “value added” in incorporating more than one approach. In addition to evaluating these questions in secondary schools, the proposed study will be one of the first to examine how to reduce harsh disciplinary practices in elementary schools, a setting in which exclusionary policies may be particularly detrimental to student achievement.

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