



## **PROJECT CATALYZE OVERVIEW**

### ***Catalyzing Student Success with Teacher and Student SEL in Chicago Public Schools***

*A project of the University of Virginia, American Institute of Research, SEL Worldwide, and CREATE*

Project CATALYZE is a unique program that seeks to boost students' social and emotional learning by introducing specific skills to help teachers manage stress and improve their teaching effectiveness. Evidence-based SEL programs may be more effective in supporting students' academic and social-behavioral outcomes when teachers have strong social-emotional skills and can build supportive relationships. Students with strong SEL skills and feelings of connection with their teachers and peers are more likely to manage their stress effectively and to engage in instruction and learn successfully. Project **CATALYZE** will examine whether a well-tested SEL program for students called the **PATHS** Curriculum is even more effective when teachers receive the **CARE** curriculum, a unique adult SEL program that supports their own well-being and stress management. By combining these two effective programs, *we hope to catalyze a boost in positive teacher, classroom, and student outcomes*. This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Education, Education Innovation Research (Grant #U411C190159).

We hypothesize that building teachers' capacity with the CARE Program will enhance (a) teachers' SEL skills and well-being, (b) the implementation quality of the PATHS curriculum, (c) and the quality of classroom interactions. These improvements will lead to (d) greater improvements in students' SEL skills, engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.

### **PATHS**

A CASEL Select Program, the PATHS® program promotes peaceful conflict resolution, emotion regulation, empathy, and responsible decision making. PATHS is one of the most extensively researched and effectively replicated classroom-based SEL programs available to schools, it has been evaluated in multiple, large (e.g., n=2,397 students) randomized control trials in urban schools in grades PreK–5 (nine RCTs) and is the most tested SEL program in the world. Evaluations have followed students for up to three years. Results showed PATHS improved academic performance and engagement, climate and social and emotional attitudes, behaviors and skills, and reduced conduct problems and emotional distress (see more information on PATHS at <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ebp/altthinking>)

## CARE

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) is a unique professional development program that offers teachers tools and resources for reducing stress, preventing burnout, enlivening teaching and helping students thrive socially, emotionally and academically. CARE proposes that teachers well-being and social and emotional competence are critical to their ability to build supportive relationships with their students, effective classroom management, and SEL program delivery. CARE has been studied in a series of rigorous studies in urban contexts examining the impacts of CARE on teacher, classroom, and student outcomes. Results showed CARE improved teacher well-being, emotion regulation, and mindfulness and the quality of classroom interactions. CARE also improved student engagement. Among students low in social skills, CARE improved reading competence (see more information on CARE at <https://createforeducation.org/care/>).

### Explanation of CATALYZE Procedures

Working with the CPS Office of Social and Emotional Learning, we are inviting 40 K-8 schools to participate in the project (20 in year 1 + 20 in year 2). Schools will adopt the PATHS SEL program for all K-5 classrooms. Grades 1-4 teachers and students will be invited to participate in the study. Half of the schools will be randomly assigned to have their grade 1-4 teachers receive PATHS plus the CARE program.

All teachers eligible to participate in this study will be given an opportunity to review this study overview, ask any questions they may have about the study, and then voluntarily sign a consent form indicating their willingness to be a participant in this study.

*Professional Learning:* All participating grade 1-4 teachers will receive 1.5 days of the PATHS® curriculum workshops or a 3-hour booster if they are already trained in PATHS. Teachers randomly selected to the CARE program will receive an additional 3.5 days of CARE professional learning (see schedule below). One day of the CARE program will be presented before the regularly scheduled PL in August and teachers will be paid a \$200 stipend to compensate them for their time (\$100 from CATALYZE. \$100 from CPS).

Professional Development Schedule
CARE + PATHS Schools 3 days in August (2 CARE, 1 PATHS) (\$200 stipend for extra day of PD) 1 ½ days in the Fall (1 day CARE, ½ day PATHS) ½ booster day in the spring (CARE)
PATHS Schools 1 day in August ½ day (3 hours) in the Fall

*Assessments:*

1. **Teacher Self-Report Survey:** Teachers will be invited to complete one 20–30-minute survey each spring (2020–2023) that asks about their professional context, thoughts, feelings, use of time, and well-being.
2. **Teacher Report on Students:** We will also invite teachers to complete a 45-minute survey that collects ratings of a random selection of eight consented students' social and emotional skills, academic performance, and behavior. Teachers will be offered a \$50 incentive for completing the student rating instrument each spring.

*Classroom Observation:* A randomly selected seventy percent of classrooms in the PATHS only and PATHS + CARE schools be observed during normal class days for a total of 2 hours within one week. Grade 1–4 classrooms will be observed in the spring of 2021–22 and 2022–23 (March/April).

*School Records:* For all students participating by providing consent, we will obtain administrative records from the district.

There will be a significant benefit and minimal burden for schools participating in this study. Eligible teachers voluntarily participate in the program; they fill out surveys on their own time during non-school hours and are compensated by the project for doing so. Teachers will receive professional development sessions at no cost to themselves. There will be no data collection activities directly involving students. The data we collect involving students will be teacher reports, classroom observations, and school records data. Schools will be asked to help in the following ways: adding letters for parents/guardians regarding the CATALYZE project to their “back-to-school” packets, allowing observers to schedule times to come in and observe participating classrooms, and assist by compiling de-identified school records aggregated at the classroom level.

*(Note: Consent forms in both English and Spanish will be sent home by schools to parents/guardians of students at the beginning of the school year. Parents/guardians who do not wish their child to participate in the study can indicate that on the form and return it to our research offices in a self-addressed stamped envelope. We will alert the teachers to the students for whom they should not give information and will cross check the data to make sure no reports were made on those students. We also take care not to collect any student records on students whose parents/guardians indicate so.)*

All data collected as part of this study will be kept strictly confidential and all procedures have been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Boards of the American Research Institute, University of Virginia, and the Research Review Board of Chicago Public Schools. All data will be used for research purposes only. Copies of all study instruments are available upon request.

*Payment:* Teachers will be compensated at their regular rate for their participation in the data collection activities related to this study. For schools randomly assigned to PATHS + CARE, Project CATALYZE will pay teachers a stipend of \$200 for one additional day of training in August.