

Application Category: Category 3 – A large county with a population greater than 500,000.

Justification: Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) is a public entity that levies taxes on the local residents through millage rates on property values. As of July 2017, Broward County was home to approximately 1.9 million residents (U.S. Census Bureau).

Broward STOPS (Schools, Teachers, Organizations, Parents, & Students against) Violence! in Elementary School Communities

A. Statement of the Problem

Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) is a suburban school district with over 271,500 students in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade and includes 234 schools, centers and technical colleges, and 88 charter schools. During the 2017-18 school year, BCPS saw 6,122 instances of school safety concerns through bullying, fighting, substance abuse, threats or intimidation to harm, weapon possession, and other related offenses (Florida Department of Education, 2018).

These infractions were eclipsed on February 14, 2018 when BCPS suffered one of the deadliest school shootings in the United States. Seventeen people – fourteen students and three staff members – were fatally shot and seventeen others were wounded.

Local School Violence Context || BCPS is one of the most diverse districts in the nation with students from 204 countries speaking 191 languages and a Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility rate of 67% (2018). As diversity abounds, so does the critical charge to ensure the highest academic attainment, safety, and well-being for all students. This charge includes the most at-risk populations including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) students, which make up at least 10% of the student population; and youth removed from their home to be placed in foster care. On average, 100 Broward youth are placed in foster care

monthly, joining the approximately 2,000 children in local dependency care due to abuse or neglect. Students in each of these subsets are prone to experience trauma either from personal involvement or as eyewitnesses. Risk of harm to self is also a concern for Broward youth.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, over twice as many people die by suicide in Florida than by homicide. From 2007-2017 Broward lost an average of 4 youths aged 10-17 to suicide each year with 11 self-imposed deaths suffered in 2016 (Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, 2018). Our ongoing consultation with trauma professionals leads us to expect suicide rates to increase in the coming years as the community continues to process the February 2018 tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

School violence prevention has long been a focus of the school district leadership. BCPS recognizes the importance of mitigating threats of bullying, assault, and suicide for all students. To enhance its efforts, BCPS was awarded the STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training program grant in fiscal year 2018 to bolster violence prevention trainings in 55 secondary schools with the highest rates of violent incidents. Through this proposal, BCPS intends to expand universal violence prevention programming to our youngest learners.

B. Program Design and Implementation

BCPS strives to provide essential services, supports, and resources to meet the needs of each student and promote social and emotional skills to prevent social alienation and violence. Through this solicitation, BCPS desires to expand evidence-based violence prevention training to school personnel in 144 primary schools along with educating students, guardians, and community members to prevent school violence in every form.

It is our community's objective to provide training to school staff and education to students with the intent to prevent student violence. The 2019 BJA STOP School Violence and Mental Health training program will allow us to meet this objective through the following deliverables:

1. Provide school violence prevention training sessions for at least 144 elementary teachers and school personnel;
2. Offer a minimum of 144 student violence prevention education sessions and awareness events targeted for a specific school climate at elementary schools to reach at least 101,000 students;
3. Deliver annual school-based trainings for parents and family members of students concerning violence prevention techniques;
4. Documentation of all training and education sessions conducted under the award

BCPS proposes a neighborhood approach to expand violence prevention strategies in primary schools. BCPS recognizes the need for early intervention and thereby envisions the elementary school students who participate in these programs will lead further movements in their middle and high schools to perpetuate positive school climate throughout all grade levels. The proposed universal program will support peer-to-peer training through a cohort of specific schools in a high school feeder pattern (zones). Year One will focus on deepening current evidence-based practices for reducing social isolation to reduce student violence and preparing for the addition of peer training. Years Two and Three will highlight secondary student leaders who return to local elementary schools to encourage primary students to report violence warning signs.

This universal program will be implemented in the 144 elementary schools across the district, including traditional schools, alternative centers, and specialty programs for the emotionally/behaviorally disabled. Secondary student leaders will engage younger students and train participants of the importance of preventing violence by speaking out.

Evidence-based Models || The second iteration of the Broward STOPS Violence! program will center around the research-based program *Start With Hello (SWH)* produced by the nonprofit Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) and the locally developed *Be the 1* Positive School Culture Initiative from the district’s violence prevention toolkit. *Be the 1* will be applied via the evidence-based Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model. *SWH* concepts will be spread by student-led SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Promise Clubs.

SWH teaches youth how to be more inclusive and connected to one another. *SWH* works to create connectedness by minimizing social isolation, marginalization and rejection, before an individual chooses to hurt self or others. *SWH* meets STOP School Violence Act evidence-based criteria as it provides moderate evidence from one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study. It was evaluated in a case-control test at Los Angeles Unified School District by the University of Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center (Heinze, et al., 2018).

While these steps may be simple, teaching children social skills has become more essential in the 21st Century. A study done by UCLA found that children’s social skills may be declining as they have less time for face-to-face interaction due to their increased use of digital media. If students are not practicing face-to-face communication, they could be losing important social skills. Therefore, we must give them the tools and model ways that students can develop relationships with other people.

While the *SWH* curriculum can be digitally downloaded and delivered in about 25 minutes, it then becomes incumbent upon students to own and perpetuate the message. Elementary-aged students will be invited to participate in an extracurricular club that promotes violence prevention. These clubs provide a structure for students to lead the violence prevention charge in their community. SHP’s SAVE Promise Clubs will be the model student organization platform. SAVE Promise

Clubs are a place for students to show their leadership, creativity and passion for protecting their friends, schools and communities from violence before it happens. They are a powerful approach to preventing violence, because they recognize the unique role that young people play in making their schools and communities safer. They teach students to be upstanders, people who speak or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

Teachers or school staff at each school provide oversight for club activities. Some of the SAVE Promise Clubs activities included in Broward STOPS Violence! are organizing *Start with Hello* Week (September 23-27, 2019), arranging school-wide poster making, social media or video advocacy campaigns for a safer, more inclusive school community. To celebrate the learning gains of the SAVE Promise Club members, in the third year of the implementation of this grant, BCPS will hold a youth summit. The summit will enhance SAVE Promise Club members' voices through workshops, peer-to-peer presentations and activities that encourage, educate, engage and empower youth with violence prevention strategies.

To build upon *SWH*, Years 2 and 3 of the grant will expand the BCPS *Be the 1* Positive School Culture Initiative (PSCI). *Be the 1* PSCI invites all members of a school community to take responsibility for the social environment. The purpose of the *Be the 1* PSCI is to create safer and more respectful school environments where all students can thrive. Only when students feel safe, can they truly focus on social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic success. *Be the 1* uses evidence-based strategies to permanently imbed Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for violence prevention and intervention within a school in a continuous improvement model. *Be the 1* is about improving the lives of everyone in a school community, students and staff, by creating an inclusive welcoming climate.

Be the 1 is not a Zero Tolerance approach emphasizing punishment. Research shows Zero Tolerance reduces the numbers of students willing to tell when there is danger at school. *Be the 1* focuses on creating a telling environment where students confide in trusted adults if they are afraid. All suspected warnings of bullying or social isolation is reported and intervened with, but increasing human connection is the primary goal of *Be the 1* PSCI. At *Be the 1* schools, staff and students intervene because they are a committed community that cares. When one of them is hurt, all are hurt.

Peer to Peer Ambassador Program || Secondary prosocial clubs will be offered the opportunity to act as peer to peer ambassadors for the elementary SAVE Promise Clubs in their school zone. Middle school and high school Peer Counseling and SAVE Promise Clubs will be the first approached for this opportunity. Prosocial clubs opting in will be proud to expand their positive messaging to younger peers and will also be given an incentive per elementary school trained. Secondary students will deliver trainings on *Be the 1*, most commonly by classroom presentation, to each age level. Once every student within the elementary school is trained the ambassadors will decide how to spend the incentive to celebrate the success. To participate in Broward STOPS Violence! these clubs must have participated in peer-to-peer training and become locally certified in the BCPS *Be the 1* curriculum.

SAVE Promise Club sponsors will receive guidance and technical support from the Broward STOPS Violence! Instructional Facilitator who will work closely with the BCPS Director of School Climate & Discipline to ensure program fidelity. The Instructional Facilitator will be responsible for upholding the grant deliverable timeline.

School-based Staff Commitment || Per Anti-Bullying Policy 5.9, each school in the district has a Prevention Liaison. Prevention Liaisons champion the message of violence prevention for their

local community and disseminate curriculum and training information to school staff as well as families. Each participating school principal will appoint its Prevention Liaison to train additional school staff in *SWH* and provide resources to the prosocial clubs on campus to multiply the information across the school population. The principals will ensure their school has a SAVE Promise Club sponsor to meet BCPS School Board mandate for universal application on SHP programming. Grant-funded staff will support accountability of this measure by alerting the Office of School Performance and Accountability for any necessary intervention.

Prevention Liaisons certified under the Broward STOPS Violence! in Elementary School Communities program will complete the following requirements: 1) training in *SWH* curriculum, 2) verify the presence of a SAVE Promise Club on campus, 3) annually complete a prosocial club evaluation form, 4) liaise with the local SAVE Promise Club sponsor and *Be the 1* Ambassador school contacts to organize trainings.

C. Capabilities and Competencies of the Applicant

This application was prepared after consultation with District leadership, community licensed mental health providers, community violence prevention groups including juvenile courts and law enforcement, licensed clinical social workers, school leaders, principals, and other school personnel to ensure that the improvements to be funded under the grant are: (a) Consistent with a comprehensive approach to preventing school violence; and (b) Individualized to the needs of each school at which those improvements are to be made.

Applicant Competencies || BCPS School Climate & Discipline Department's (formerly Diversity, Prevention & Intervention) goal is to lead the change for all students in achieving lifelong academic, behavioral, social and emotional success. This goal is achieved by providing

essential services, supports and resources to all BCPS schools. Resources are grouped into the six (6) strands of prevention and intervention: diversity, health and wellness, instructional strategies, substance abuse prevention, violence prevention, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/academic and behavioral supports.

SC&D employs culturally competent professionals specifically trained on the many subject areas that fall under the six strands of prevention and intervention. SC&D's professionals promote the department's vision by providing resources and services in their areas of specialty. The services include, but are not limited to, education and training, print materials, curriculum, as well as tools for assessment, intervention and follow-up support. SC&D offers evidence-based programs and curriculum that have been shown to effectively meet the needs of students, staff and community members in a district that includes urban and suburban pockets.

Key staff || **Director, School Climate & Discipline**, This position will manage the grant-funded staff. To be hired. This position develops strategies and provides leadership in implementing the BCPS Diversity, Cultural Outreach & Prevention programs. This Director will review and assist in developing the District's Student Code of Conduct, Suspension and Expulsion, Anti-Bullying, Dating Violence and Diversity policies and the implementation of these policies. **Prevention Specialist**, Aimee Wood will be a source of expertise to assist training the grant-funded staff. Aimee Wood has been working as an expert in the field of violence prevention for over twenty years. Aimee Wood is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Certified Olweus Bullying Program Trainer. Ms. Wood is a recognized national trainer having presented to thousands of students, administrators, teachers and parents on violence prevention, positive school culture, classroom management, bullying prevention and intervention, the Support Group Method, cyberbullying/sexting, internet safety, and is a Master

Trainer for Safe Dates and Dating Matters. **Broward STOPS Violence! Instructional**

Facilitator, grant-funded staff. This new position will dedicate 100% of its time to this project and be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the elementary violence prevention program, specifically, coordinating the project activities, gathering evaluation data, and monitoring of the budget expenditures. The Instructional Facilitator will travel to each school site to support the student activities, provide club resources, manage logistics for the educational events, evaluate program delivery, and serve as the central contact for data collection protocol with the Department of Justice.

Global Standards Package || BCPS recognizes that the DOJ utilizes the Global Standards Package (GSP) in implementing data standardization, messaging architecture, security, and privacy requirements. The applicant has experience with GSP and anticipates maintaining quarterly reporting requirements.

D. Plan for Collecting the Required Data and Performance Measures

Throughout the program, the Broward STOPS Violence! Instructional Facilitator will gather local data to submit bi-annual performance metrics as part of their progress reports in the Department of Justice’s Grants Management System. Output and outcome measurements will be stored in three manners. BCPS uses Learning Across Broward (LAB), a web-based application, to gather and maintain professional development documents. SAVE Promise Club sponsors will complete logs of student extracurricular activities at their school. School violence incidents are tracked within BCPS’ Discipline Management System (DMS).

The Broward STOPS Violence! Instructional Facilitator will work with BCPS Student Assessment and Research to design a performance measurement plan that provides comprehensive review of the data within the given program timeline. The table below outlines the data review strategy.

Broward STOPS Violence! in Elementary School Communities – Program Narrative
 Category 3: BJA-2019-15117

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Outputs</u>	<u>Measurement</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>
1. To provide training sessions to teachers and school personnel designed to respond to threats of violence and prevent violence on campus	# of trainings completed	LAB course offering log	A) Improve school climate as measured by a decrease in the number of violent acts committed by students against other persons B) Decrease rate of violent acts committed by Broward youth against self
	# of school staff trained	LAB attendance logs	
	Average number of training hours per person trained	LAB attendance logs	
2. To provide education sessions and awareness campaigns to students with the intent to prevent violence against others or self	# of trainings or awareness campaigns completed	SAVE Promise Club records	B) Decrease rate of violent acts committed by Broward youth against self
	# of individuals who received the training/ awareness campaign	Attendance logs	
	Percent of students receiving the training in person	Attendance logs	

The chosen deliverables data will be evaluated annually to determine if the goal to train all students within high-need secondary schools is met. This will be coupled with continued review of district school violence data to note trends and determine future needs for intervention or celebration of shift in school climate. BCPS is committed to replicating best practices and providing specialized supports to areas with high rates of violence against self and others.

BCPS assures that it will maintain and report such data, records, and information (programmatic and financial) as the BJA Director may reasonably require.