

Center for Family Supportive Schools and Communities

Proposal

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Department: Secondary Education

Proposal background or rationale – discuss the relationship of the proposal to Family Supportive Schools & Communities and how the project fits into the CFSS&C model; describe how the project will focus on the AFFS criteria.

Alone Together: A conceptual framework to foster nested resilience for challenged families and the teachers that serve them.

Many of today's adolescents and their families come from a culture that includes pervasive familial and societal violence and poverty. Intimately familiar with traumatizing events of domestic abuse, rape, homicide, gang violence, drug- and alcohol-related violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, dismemberment, or loss of "dear ones" in war, and/or the tragic loss of family and friends to suicide, these family members typically suffer alone in isolation and despair. Subsequent costs to our society may be found in the "A.C.E.'s" study and in the 2006 report of the U.S. Justice Department.

What are classroom teachers to do when their students' academic performance have been uprooted by storms of violence, and learning disrupted by consequential suffering, isolation and despair? More and more educators, recognizing that a significant number of students from these families are failing in our schools, have adopted a restorative pedagogy grounded in the research on "childhood resiliency." This relatively new body of research requires a shift in thinking from what is "wrong" with "problem" children and their families who are the "casualties of negative/pathological factors" to what is "right" with those children and their families that enables them to adapt, and in some cases, thrive, despite the traumatic stressors in their lives.

This project will seek to align recommendations made by: 1) leading researchers in developmental psychology and trauma psychology with regards to appropriate pedagogies and dispositions, 2) the Washington Family Policy Council and the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative of Massachusetts with regards to policies and procedures; 3) state and national standards for the certification of teachers; and 4) family friendly school criteria recommended by Washington Alliance for Better Schools.

Objective(s):

1. Align research findings from trauma psychology (Kinniburgh, Blaustein and Spinzolla, 2005) with research findings from developmental psychology (Masten and Coatsworth 1998) to create appropriate domains and categories for a grid that will speak to standards, policy recommendations, and appropriate classroom practices.

2. Align standards from Washington's Pedagogy Assessment (PPA), the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) for the certification of teachers with the domains and categories listed in #1.
3. Illustrate the connections between appropriate teaching skills and classroom strategies (e.g., active listening and observation, creation of predictable and safe environments) and the domains, policy recommendations and standards listed in #1 and #2 above.
4. Inclusion of these materials in SEC 534 and SEC 432.
5. Propose, to the administration of Mount Vernon High School where I will be on sabbatical next year, a training session on trauma sensitive and family friendly instructional policies, methods and procedures. This training would be attended by both in-service and pre-service teachers.

Deliverable(s) and Timeline:

1. Grid with #1, #2, and #3 (as listed above) September 15, 2007. Inclusion (#4) the following year.
2. Discussion of #5 with MVHS administration, August 2007 with possible training session in February 2008.

Support Needed:

1. Permissions to distribute rubrics materials from "Achieving Family Friendly Schools" with appropriate citations, to students in SEC 534 and SEC 432.
2. A copy of Family Friendly materials to share with MVHS administration, August 2007.
3. Trainers for MVHS, should they accept a training session February 2008.

Funding requested:

\$1,000

Approvals: