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US DOJ 9/30/2015 12:23:23 PM PAGE 1/003 Fax Server



**Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs

*Washington, D.C. 20531*

**GRANT AWARD NOTICE**  
**IMPORTANT**

**FAX TRANSMISSION NUMBER:** (803) 734-5167

**To:** The Honorable Nikki R. Haley

**Attn:** James Burns  
(803) 734-2100

**From:** Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Communications

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**SUBJECT:**

FY 15 Comprehensive School Safety Initiative



## Department of Justice

### Office of Justice Programs

Office of Communications

Washington, D.C. 20531

#### GRANT NOTIFICATION

Grant Number: 2015-CK-BX-0018

Name & Address of Recipient: University Of South Carolina  
1600 Hampton Street, Suite 414  
City, State & ZIP: Columbia, South Carolina 29208-0001

Recipient Project Director/Contact:  
Daniel Christmus  
Senior Research Administrator

Phone: (803) 777-8438

Title of Program: FY 15 Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

Title of Project: FY 15 Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

Amount of Award: \$ 4,106,951 Date of Award: 09/30/2015

Awarding Agency: National Institute of Justice  
Cathy Girouard

Supplement: No

Statutory Authority for Program:  
FY15(NIJ - Comprehensive School Safety Initiative) Pub. L. No. 113-235, 128 Stat. 2130, 2194; 28 USC 530C

Impact/Focus: Local CFDA Number: 16.560

#### Project Description:

Bullying, fighting, and other forms of interpersonal violence occur frequently in elementary schools, and are associated with student distress, poor school functioning, and increases in aggression, delinquency, and other behavior problems. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a holistic, multi-tiered, evidence-based approach for preventing and reducing aggression and other problem behavior in school. However, the majority of PBIS schools struggle with more intensive interventions, which many students who present aggressive and disruptive behaviors need. School mental health (SMH) offers promise for addressing these limitations in PBIS. However, SMH lacks an implementation structure resulting in students effectively needing to be at crisis level to be referred for services. Unfortunately, PBIS and SMH have operated separately limiting impacts of both initiatives. To address these limitations, the Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) has been developed by leaders from national centers for both initiatives, providing specific guidance on PBIS-SMH interconnection through effective teams, data-based decision making, implementation support for evidence-based practices and ongoing quality improvement to assure responsiveness to school and student needs. We propose that the ISF will bring coherence to and increase positive impacts of efforts in schools to improve school climate and safety, reduce discipline problems and aggressive behaviors, reduce exposure to bullying and violence, and improve student mental and behavioral health.

Involving partnerships with school districts and community mental health agencies in SC and FL, 24 schools implementing PBIS with fidelity will be randomly assigned to the three conditions: the ISF, PBIS and SMH, or PBIS alone (8 schools per condition). Data will be gathered from school records, teacher and student reports, and PBIS teams. We will assess impacts of ISF compared to the other two conditions on school climate and safety; and student exposure to violence, problem behavior, and discipline problems, and their access to and quality of services. Multilevel

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analyses will be used to account for repeated observations of students and nesting of students in schools, and cost-effectiveness analyses will be used to evaluate the economic impact of the interventions, with de-identified data archived. We predict the study will document advantages of the ISF as a foundation for promoting school safety and preventing/addressing school violence. Products will include an interim and final report and full database usable by NIJ, at least five publications in high impact journals, the strengthening of a national webinar series, and at least 10 conference presentations to diverse audiences.

This project contains a research and/or development component, as defined in applicable law.

ca/nf

For more information about this grant, contact the Office of Justice Program's Office of Communications at 202/307-0703.