Contact email: Jeffrey A. Rosen; jrosen@rti.org

Title: Personalization for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (PASL): QED Results from a District-wide Social Emotional Learning Intervention

First and second choice of conference section: 1) Social and Emotional Learning in Educational Settings, 2) Academic Learning

Names of all authors in their intended order: Jeffrey A. Rosen[1], Yihua Hong[1] (yhong@rti.org - presenter), Susan Rotermund (srotermund@rti.org)[1], and Katherine Leu (kbtleu@gmail.com)[2]

[1] RTI International [2] University of Michigan

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

This quasi-experimental design study examined a program called Personalization for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (PASL), a systemic school-based intervention for 9th graders in which administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers intentionally attend to students' academic, social emotional, and behavioral needs (Rutledge & Cannata, 2016; Rutledge, Cohen-Vogel, Osborne-Lampkin, & Roberts, 2015). PASL was developed based on research that finds that successful high schools work as systems of essential components (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2009). Specifically, PASL is built around rigorous instruction, aligned curriculum, personalized learning connections, culture of learning and professional behavior, connections to external communities, and learning centered leadership.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study estimated the one-year effects of 9th grade student participation in the PASL program over a single academic year. While schools were granted wide flexibility in how they administered PASL (i.e., some schools administered the program to all 9th graders while others administered to only a subset of their 9th graders), all engaged in the core components of the PASL program;

We investigated the following research questions:

> R1 (SEL outcomes): Over a single academic year, does student participation in PASL result in increased *self-efficacy, self-regulation and engagement/sense of belonging in school?*

> R2 (traditional academic outcomes): Over a single academic year, does student participation in PASL result in improvements in credits earned and attempted, higher test scores, higher attendance and fewer disciplinary referrals?

SETTING/PARTICIPANTS

Since 2014-15, PASL has been gradually implemented in all high schools in the Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). In 2017-18, BCPS implemented PASL for incoming 9th graders in 8 high schools and seven high schools at that point had yet to implement the program. Eligible

participants were all 9th first time grade students in treatment schools confirmed to be receiving the PASL program.

INTERVENTION

PASL is built on an initial set of core components: (1) routine *rapid check ins* between adults and students—where adults intentionally and routinely check in with a targeted group of students, (2) goal setting activities that help students set short and long term goals, (3) intentional use of data to track student progress, (4) educator teams of administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers that meet to discuss student progress, and (5) a culture of personalization. Researchers from Vanderbilt and Florida State Universities developed these practices in conjunction with a network of educators from BCPS high schools. As a model, PASL builds on structures and practices already present in schools (and within staff scope of work) and that are familiar to administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers. PASL strategies are theorized to influence the development of non-cognitive factors through a systemic approach both in schools and in the implementation process. With PASL, adults in schools intentionally and deliberately attend to students' interests and needs by engaging in organizational routines that institutionalize personalization. By adapting PASL activities and practices to their school contexts, adults in schools will have the skills and organizational routines to personalize the learning experience for their students, leading to improved student success and outcomes. In the classroom, teachers intentionally and deliberately use routine *rapid check ins* with students and *goal setting* to cultivate caring and supportive adult-student relationships. Through these experiences, students build social emotional skills and greater self-efficacy beliefs and improve their academic and non-cognitive outcomes. The PASL implementation process has its own theory of action. Adoption of PASL in schools is a highly local activity nested in a district and state context. Local stakeholders must understand the implementation of PASL as a collaborative and iterative process in which they participate in their own planning, implementation, and analysis of their reform approaches. A collaborative process leads to greater buy-in by all stakeholders and therefore greater integrity. In the implementation process, more experienced schools serve as mentors and advisees to newer schools, thus supporting and facilitating scaling out and building district capacity.

RESEACH DESIGN: This study is a quasi-experimental study using propensity score methods (matching conducted on 35 covariates). The final analytic sample includes 536 treatment and 532 control group 9th graders in 12 BCPS high schools.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The study uses data from student fall and spring surveys which assessed growth in student's 1) self-regulation, 2) self-efficacy, and 3) engagement/sense of belonging in school. Student administrative records were collected at the end of the 2017-18 academic and used to assess changes in credits earned and attempted, test scores, attendance and disciplinary referrals. Results are based on multi-level models.

FINDINGS

Social Emotional Learning Outcomes

The PASL program exhibited differential effects on students' self-regulation and self-efficacy. While we did not find any main effects on these survey outcomes, moderator effects were found for a student's reading performance level. For each survey outcome, there was a significant interaction effect for reading performance, suggesting PASL effects differed by student reading proficiency levels. For the lowest performing reading students, PASL had a statistically significant *negative* effect on self-efficacy (effect size of .26). For middle performing reading students, PASL had a statistically significant *negative* effect on students' self-regulation (effect size of .26). Finally, for the highest reading performers, PASL had a statistically significant *positive* effect on students' self-regulation (effect size of .05) and self-efficacy (effect size of .01) but a significant *negative* effect on these students' engagement (effect size of .02).

Academic Outcomes

We found positive and practically important (but not statistically significant) effects for number of suspensions (effect size of 1.68), disciplinary incidents (effect size of .55), and 9th grade credits earned (effect size of .46). We found no effects of statistical or practical importance for the number of unexcused absences, credits attempted, and standardized reading scores. As with the socio emotional outcomes we tested for interaction effects for reading performance and found, those interactions to be similar to the pattern of main effects for these academic outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

PASL demonstrates potentially positive and practically important effects for ninth graders across several important academic outcomes. Further study is warranted, and it is reasonable to consider implementing the PASL program in other districts.

REFERENCES

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Goldring, E. B., Porter, A. C., Murphy, J., Elliott, S., & Cravens, X. (2009). Assessing learning-centered leadership: Connections to research, professional standards, and current practices. *Leadership and Policy in Schools,* 8(1), 1–36.

Rutledge, S. & Cannata, M. (2016). Identifying and Understanding Effective High Schools: Personalization for Academic and Social Learning and Student Ownership and Responsibility. *Phi Delta Kappan 97*(6):60-64

Rutledge, S.A., Cohen-Vogel, L., Osborne-Lampkin, L. & Roberts, R. (2015.) Understanding effective high schools: Evidence for personalization for academic and social emotional learning. *American Educational Research Journal (52)* 6, 1060-1092.