

# *Double Check: A Cultural Proficiency and Student Engagement Model*

## Overview of Johns Hopkins University's US Department of Education Grant



### Project Rationale

- Culturally diverse students are disproportionately represented in special education programs and receive disproportionately high rates of office disciplinary referrals and suspensions.
- Research suggests that teachers require additional professional development on issues related to culturally responsive education in order to appropriately respond to and understand the behaviors of culturally diverse students and to engage diverse learners in the curriculum. However, there has been limited systematic research which has identified direct and explicit professional development activities and supports that provide specific actions educators can take to reduce disproportionality and improve student engagement.
- Additional research is needed to determine effective professional development activities and supports that provide educators with explicit strategies which reduce the disproportionate representation of culturally diverse students in office disciplinary referrals and suspensions, and to actively engage all students in the curriculum.

### Overview of the Double Check Model

- Double Check is a framework that Johns Hopkins University researchers developed for helping teachers and school staff to reflect on, and ultimately address the following five core components associated with culturally responsive practices: *Connection to Curriculum*, *Authentic Relationships*, *Reflective Thinking*, *Effective Communication*, and *Sensitivity to Students' Culture* (i.e., CARES) (Rosenberg, 2007).
- The self-reflection process helps to increase awareness of one's own cultural sensitivities. With this heightened awareness, teachers and other staff can understand and engage students in a more functional way. This combination of awareness and explicit functional strategies can help teachers engage in more comprehensive intervention planning and provide supports for problematic student behaviors (Hershfeldt, Sechrest, Pell, Rosenberg, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2009).
- Research suggests that until teachers (a) recognize and assess how their own culture affects behavior and (b) have a set of explicit strategies that can be readily applied, they are unlikely to employ culturally responsive behavior management strategies in their classrooms (Hershfeldt et al., 2009). Additional supports through coaching will likely increase teachers' use of culturally appropriate behavior management and discipline strategies.

### Project Aims

- Support schools by providing the Double Check professional development and on-site technical assistance (e.g., coaching) regarding cultural proficiency and student engagement to teachers and school staff. Additional support will be provided to the PBIS teams in the use of data (e.g., office discipline referrals, suspensions, achievement) to reduce disproportionality.
- Collect data on the impact of the professional development and coaching on staff members' attitudes regarding cultural proficiency and disproportionality and their use of evidence-based and culturally sensitive interventions to reduce behavior problems and increase student engagement.

### Sample of Schools

- We plan to work with a total of 12 schools for the 2013-14 school year, including 6 elementary and 6 middle schools. We are entering the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the project. We worked with 4 schools in 2011-12 and 6 schools in 2012-13.
- Eligible elementary and middle schools need to: 1) have implemented the critical elements of PBIS (as indicated by a score of 80% or higher on the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET), 2) be willing to work with a Double Check Coach, and 3) provide access to staff for professional development and classroom-based coaching.

### Professional Development and Supports Provided to Schools

- All participating schools will receive on-site training and professional development from a Coach following the five factors of the Double Check model.
  - Examples of topics to be covered during the professional development sessions include:
    - *Dissecting Disrespect: Function-based Thinking*-Attendees develop skills and strategies to understand the motivation behind behavior perceived as disrespectful.

- *Crack the Code of Communication*-Attendees learn how to effectively communicate with culturally diverse students.
- *Understanding Cultural and Situational Messages*-Attendees develop strategies that are sensitive to students with diverse cultural backgrounds.
- *Authentic Relationships*-Attendees develop culturally responsive teaching strategies and learn ways to motivate seemingly “unmotivated” learners by enhancing teacher-student relationships.
- Classroom teachers in all schools will be asked to participate in one-on-one coaching. Half of all consenting classroom teachers will be randomized to receive on-site coaching and support from a Double Check Coach in the form of classroom-based consultation and coaching to increase implementation of new skills and strategies. The coach will utilize the Classroom Check-Up model of coaching. The other half of the teachers will not receive the coaching, and will serve as comparison teachers.
  - The Classroom Check-Up (CCU) is a teacher coaching model based on motivational interviewing to enhance teacher motivation and skills related to classroom behavior management practices (Reinke et al., 2008). Some specific motivational enhancement strategies utilized by the CCU include personalized feedback to teachers on classroom behaviors, encouraging personal responsibility for decision-making while offering direct advice if solicited, the development of a menu of options for interventions, and supporting teacher self-efficacy by identifying existing strengths and times when teachers have successfully changed classroom behaviors in the past (Miller & Rollnick, 2002).
- Two administrator lunches/dinners will be held by the Research Team during the project. Administrators can attend the meeting to receive more support from the Double Check Coaches and research staff, and to provide feedback on the project and their needs.

### **Collaboration with School Staff and Equity Team**

- The Double Check project is committed to providing relevant and useful strategies and information that speak to each school’s specific characteristics and needs. A representative from each school is invited to serve as a Double Check Liaison between school staff and the Double Check team to co-plan and co-present professional development sessions. Many schools have chosen a member of their Equity Team to serve as their liaison. The liaison will be asked to provide feedback on activities developed for each professional development session as well as give feedback after a professional development session has been delivered.

### **Benefits to Participating Schools**

- All participating schools will receive on-site professional development from the assigned Double Check Coach for the 2013-14 academic year. In addition, randomly assigned teachers within all schools will receive classroom-based coaching from the assigned Double Check coach, whereas those teachers randomized to the comparison condition will not receive coaching.
- All schools will learn about tangible steps they can use to reduce disproportionality and increase cultural competence among staff members.
- All classroom teachers who consent to receive coaching will receive a gift card/honorarium (e.g., Target, Wal-Mart) for their participation. These teachers will receive one-on-one feedback to increase their classroom management skills.
- All teachers who complete the self-report pre/post surveys and classroom observations for the project will receive a gift card/honorarium.
- All participating schools will receive an annual honorarium (\$1,000) and SWIS fees will be covered by the project (\$250) for the year during which they are enrolled in the project.
- The research team will also conduct a School-wide Evaluation Tool/Individual Student Systems Evaluation Tool (SET/ISSET) at each participating school in the spring to document the fidelity of PBIS.

### **Data to Be Collected**

- **Evaluation form** will be completed at the conclusion of each staff professional development session. The evaluation form is anonymous and contains approximately 15 items that assess participants’ satisfaction with the content of the session, their likelihood of using the skills covered during the training session, and their need for additional support in the use of the skills.

- **Survey of teaching styles** is a 70-item survey that examines culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs. This measure is an abbreviated and slightly modified version of the published Culturally Responsive Teaching Scale (Siwatu, 2007). The survey will be completed by all participating teachers in the fall and spring of the project.
- **Feedback session** with school administration regarding the professional development series and goals for cultural proficiency and student engagement.
- **Focus groups** will be conducted with select teachers and staff to identify aspects of the professional development and coaching which could be improved.
- **Observations of classroom management practices** of participating classroom teachers will be conducted by research staff in the fall and spring. A school-level report will be provided to the administrators summarizing these data in aggregate at each timepoint.
- **Office discipline referrals and suspensions** will be collected each year from SWIS and the district to determine whether there are reductions in overall levels of discipline problems and the over-representation of culturally diverse students. No personal student identifiers will be obtained.
- **Fidelity of PBIS** will be assessed by the research team using the School-wide Evaluation Tool/Individual Student Systems Evaluation Tool (SET/ISSET). The administrator will receive a report summarizing these data.

### Funding

- Johns Hopkins University in partnership with Anne Arundel County Public Schools has received a 3-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Educational Sciences (IES) to further develop, integrate, and pilot the Double Check cultural proficiency model with the Classroom Check-Up coaching model in elementary and middle schools already implementing PBIS.

### Timeline

- Summer 2011: Project began and enrolled first cohort of 4 schools.
- Summer 2012: Continued working with 6 schools.
- Summer 2013: Enroll final cohort of 12 schools.
- Summer 2014: Project ends. Results are shared locally and nationally.

### Advisory Board

- We have formed an advisory board to provide feedback and consultation on the project and materials developed.
- **Expert Advisory Board:** Comprised of researchers from across the country with expertise in cultural proficiency and student engagement.

### Research Partners at Johns Hopkins University and Key Consultants

- Catherine Bradshaw, Ph.D. (Prevention Center Co-Director): *Project Director*
- Katrina Debnam, Ph.D.: *Project Manager*
- Sandy Hardee, M.Ed.: *Double Check Coach*
- Lana Asuncion, Ed.D.: *Double Check Coach*
- Michael Rosenberg, Ph.D. (Dean, School of Education, SUNY New Paltz): *Project Co-Director*
- Norma Day-Vines, Ph.D. (Professor): *Co-Investigator*
- Philip Leaf, Ph.D. (Professor & Center Director): *Co-Investigator*
- James Patton, Ph.D. (Professor, William & Mary College): *Consultant & Lead Member of Advisory Board*
- George Sugai, Ph.D. (Professor, University of Connecticut): *Consultant & Member of Advisory Board*
- Michael Lindsey, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Univ. of Maryland): *Consultant & Member of Advisory Board*

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