



# Evidence-based practices

*Middle school*

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**Prepared for the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood  
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This packet lists “evidence-based practices” for consideration by Solution Action Groups as we develop recommendations for the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood. It also includes some local programs which have not yet been nationally identified as “evidence-based practices,” but which do have research to support their effectiveness and which appeared in Saint Paul’s Promise Neighborhood proposal.

### ***What are evidence-based practices?***

Evidence-based practices are programs which research has shown to be effective with children and young people. No program can ever be perfect, but evidence-based practices have research to show that they have the greatest chance of success with the largest number of children. (Other programs might be effective, but they don’t have research evidence.)

### ***Why are evidence-based practices important for the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood?***

Evidence-based practices are important for two reasons.

First, we want to make the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood as effective as possible for as many children as possible. The more that we can include evidence-based practices in our plans, the greater the chances that we can support all of the neighborhood’s children.

Second, the federal government and other funders favor the use of evidence-based practices. The more evidence-based practices that we include in our design of the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood, the better our chances of receiving the investments we need to succeed.

### ***How should we include evidence-based practices in our planning?***

Each Solution Action Group will identify solutions for a specific age range of children in the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood. These solutions will support children to succeed in school and in life. We want to pick solutions which will help children at their present age – and which will have positive effects on them for the rest of their lives.

In each of our groups, we should select solutions which we consider most likely to have positive impacts on children. Over the next 10 years or more, the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood will measure those impacts with “indicators”. That is, we will measure indicators such as the *percentage of five year olds who are ready to attend kindergarten*, or the *proportion of students who attend school regularly*, or the *proportion of children who graduate from high school*.

In our groups, we want to select solutions which will move the indicators in a positive direction. For example, this means:

- If the indicator we want to move in a positive direction is the *percentage of third graders who read at their grade level*, we need to ask: What solutions will increase reading achievement for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders from the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood?
- If the indicator we want to move in a positive direction is the *percentage of students with a caring adult in their home, school or community*, we need to ask: What solutions will increase the number of students from the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood who have a caring adult?

***Will all of our solutions be evidence-based practices?***

Not all, but hopefully, as many as possible. Solutions can include:

- Services or programs (new or improved) that will be available to children and their families (e.g., after school tutoring for students; parent education for pregnant women and their partners; health screening for preschool children; etc.)
- Reorganization of current efforts in the neighborhood – getting people to work in different ways (e.g., parents, teachers, police, librarians, etc.)
- Activities by neighborhood residents to support young people or to make the neighborhood better for all (volunteer mentoring of young people; block clubs; etc.).
- New locations for services (e.g., making services available in several schools, community centers, or other places)
- Resources (e.g., a new playground, a traffic light at a dangerous intersection, etc.)

Researchers have not developed evidence-based practices for everything we need to do. We should use evidence-based practices when they fit, but we must also do our best to develop other solutions suited to the unique situation of children in the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood – that is, solutions suited to the geography of the neighborhood, the diverse cultures who live here, and other factors. The plan for the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood will include a mixture of evidence-based practices and other solutions, crafted to fit the neighborhood.

**Format:** Evidence-based practices, and the other local, research-based practices from our Promise Neighborhood proposal, appear in the following format:

**Result:** The outcome we are trying to achieve, e.g., “children enter kindergarten ready to learn,” or “children have access to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning tools.”

**Indicator:** The measure which tells us if we have achieved a result, e.g., “students who are physically active,” or “high school graduates get a post-secondary degree”. (Note: These are just some of the indicators which we have identified in the Solution Action Groups. The longer lists which we developed appear in a separate document.)

**Program/practice:** The name of the program, a brief description, and a local provider (if there is one).

**Target group:** The group for whom the program/practice is appropriate.

**Impact:** The results which research shows the program/practice can achieve.

At the end of the packet, we have identified research sources.

## *Middle school*

**Result:** STUDENTS ARE PROFICIENT IN CORE SUBJECTS

**Indicator:** Students perform at or above grade level according to state language arts and mathematics assessments

Program/practice	Target group	Impact
<p><b>America's Choice*</b> - promotes instructional improvement through curricular guides and teacher guidance, especially in language arts, but also mathematics. <i>Local provider: SPPS curriculum based on this model</i></p>	Customized for elementary, K-8, middle, and high schools.	Showed strong effects in literacy and mathematics, outpacing comparison schools.
<p><b>Boys &amp; Girls Club of Philadelphia, Inc.*</b> - range of programs include homework assistance, technology centers, sports and art classes, leadership development <i>Local provider: In St. Paul</i></p>	Middle and high school students	Improved verbal and writing skills and school engagement
<p><b>Fast Track Prevention Project*</b> - comprehensive intervention including classroom curriculum, teacher training, tutoring, family group meetings, and home visits</p>	1 <sup>st</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Positive impacts on social, academic, and behavioral outcomes.
<p><b>Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)</b> - places students in college preparatory track and supports them academically (e.g. tutoring, study skills, peer group support) <i>Local provider: Selected Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS)</i></p>	Underserved, potentially first generation college students earning average grades	May increase enrollment in courses of higher rigor and high school graduation rates
<p><b>Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework (PBIS)</b> - A decision making framework guiding selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices. Uses a three-tiered continuum in which students experience supports based on their behavioral responsiveness to intervention.</p>	School-age	Improved academic and behavior outcomes for students.

\* Evidence-based practice

**Result: STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITION FROM MIDDLE GRADES TO HIGH SCHOOL**

**Indicator: Students attend school regularly**

Program/practice	Target group	Impact
<b>ALAS*</b> - intervention addressing various factors that affect dropping out. A counselor coordinates student-specific interventions. Students and parents receive training on relevant social and academic skills.	Middle and high school students	Positive impacts on staying in school
<b>Twelve Together*</b> - Weekly support and mentoring program; peer discussion, homework assistance, trips to college campuses, and annual retreat	Middle and high school students	Positive effects on staying in school
<b>Check &amp; Connect*</b> - a dropout prevention strategy based on close monitoring of students' school performance, as well as elements of mentoring, case management and other supports. <i>Local initiative: Selected Minneapolis public schools and some Dakota County school districts</i>	Middle and high school students.	Positive effect on students staying in school; potentially positive effect on students' progressing in school.

**Result: STUDENTS ARE HEALTHY**

**Indicator: Children are physically active and regularly eat fruits and vegetables**

Program/practice	Target group	Impact
<b>Child and Adolescent Trial for Cardio-vascular Health (CATCH)*</b> - educational curriculum addressing eating habits along with physical activity; school food service modifications and food service personnel training	Middle school students	Intervention group averaged more minutes of daily vigorous activity and slight improvements in dietary choices.
<b>SHAPEDOWN*</b> - fitness and diet program; regular meetings with a weigh-in, group interaction, and exercise	Middle school and high school students	Significant improvement on relative weight, weight-related behavior, and weight management knowledge
<b>Center for Disease Control's key strategies for schools to prevent obesity</b> - <i>Local provider : SPPS implemented nutrition and physical activity policies/procedures; City of St. Paul, SPPS, and YWCA offer extended day physical recreation/nutrition opportunities</i>	School-age	Well-designed, well-implemented school programs can effectively promote physical activity and healthy eating.

\* Evidence-based practice

**Result: STUDENTS LIVE IN STABLE COMMUNITIES**

**Indicator: Students live in the same place/experience a low mobility rate**

Program/practice	Target group	Impact
<b>Housing support programs</b> - housing and services focused on the unique needs of people exiting homelessness <i>Local provider: Wilder's ROOF and QUEST; YWCA programs</i>	Homeless families	Significant increase in housing stability
<b>Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program</b> - provided a variety of services to homeowners faced with foreclosure, including negotiations with lenders, budget and mortgage counseling, and referrals to social services <i>Local initiative: Program sites included Minneapolis and St. Paul.</i>	Homeowners faced with foreclosure	The program successfully prevented foreclosures for up to 42%-62% of homeowners in program (depends on individual program).

**Result: STUDENTS FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL AND IN THEIR COMMUNITY**

**Indicator: Students feel safe at school and while traveling to and from school**

Program/practice	Target group	Impact
<b>Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (BPP)*</b> - School-wide survey to assess nature and prevalence of bullying, increased supervision, rules against bullying, regular class meetings, individual interventions with students identified as bullies and victims, and discussions with parents <i>Local provider: In about 15 metro area schools</i>	Universal intervention for all students within the school, plus individual interventions targeted at students identified as bullies and victims of bullying	Reductions in students' reports of bullying, victimization, and antisocial behavior. Improved social climate of the classroom.

\* Evidence-based practice

**Result: FAMILIES/COMMUNITY MEMBERS SUPPORT LEARNING**

**Indicator: Students have a caring adult in their home, school or community**

Program/practice	Target group	Impact
<b>Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)*</b> - intensive mentoring program pairing at-risk participants with community volunteers <i>Local provider: In St. Paul</i>	Ages 10-16	Improved relationships with parents and peers.
<b>Families and Schools Together (FAST)*</b> - parent involvement program designed to help at-risk youth build relationships and prevent juvenile delinquency	Ages 3-14	Improved social and academic performance.
<b>Wilder Foundation's Project Kofi and Hlub Zoo</b> - School-based mental health programs. <i>Local initiatives: Wilder Foundation.</i>	Project Kofi – African American males in grades 3-8.  Hlub Zoo – Hmong girls from age 8 to 13.	Improvement in student's emotional and behavioral well-being.

**Indicator: Students have family members who attend parent-teacher conferences**

**Result: STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNING TOOLS**

**Indicator: Students have school and/or home access to a computer and broadband internet**

*\*Evidence-based practice*



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