



## Press Release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Center for Supportive Schools Selected by U.S. Department of Education as a Highest-Rated Applicant for 2015 Investing in Innovation Competition

*Five-year federal grant will replicate and evaluate a school-based, high school transition and cross-age peer mentoring program*

**Princeton, NJ** – The Center for Supportive Schools (CSS) was selected as one of the 13 highest-rated applicants, out of more than 400 applications, for the U.S. Department of Education’s \$113 million Investing in Innovation (i3) 2015 competition. The Einhorn Family Charitable Trust will provide the private-sector match funds required under i3. The Department expects to formalize i3 grantee awards next month.

With this funding, CSS will expand its school-based, high school transition and cross-age peer mentoring program for 9th grade students, known as Peer Group Connection (PGC), into six low-income rural North Carolina high schools. CSS will partner with The Policy & Research Group to conduct a large-scale rigorous evaluation, including a randomized control trial, of PGC to measure the program's positive impact on students’ social and emotional skills and behaviors that support academic and other important school-related outcomes. This project seeks to build upon the results of previous research studies that demonstrate PGC’s positive impact on educational outcomes for low-income students.

“We are both honored and thrilled to receive this prestigious award that will enable us to help more schools leverage the leadership potential of students to create vibrant learning environments,” said Daniel F. Oscar, President & CEO of CSS. “This project brings us closer to reaching our goal that every school develop all their students into leaders who make their schools safer, more supportive, engaging, and inspiring.”

PGC trains select school faculty to prepare older students, specifically high school juniors and seniors, to serve as peer leaders and mentor and educate younger students, specifically freshmen. Peer leaders are trained through a daily, credit-bearing leadership course taught by school faculty during regular school hours. CSS builds the capacity of schools to implement PGC by providing training, curriculum, and on-site technical assistance to stakeholders and school faculty. The direct implementation of CSS is carried out by faculty employed by and peer leaders enrolled in participating schools.

The proposed project will reach approximately 1,500 students in low-income, rural communities in North Carolina. Each of these communities has a high percentage of students who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program and a high percentage of children who are from families below the poverty line.

### **About CSS**

The Center for Supportive Schools (CSS, formerly Princeton Center for Leadership Training) has a 35-year history of partnering with K-12 schools throughout the United States to train and mobilize students to be lifelong leaders who make schools better for themselves, their peers, and younger students. As a result, schools become safer, more supportive, engaging, inspiring learning environments and students become strongly connected through caring relationships with adults and one another; and highly skilled in the leadership, academic, social, and emotional skills that are proven to result in school and life success. Please visit [www.supportiveschools.org](http://www.supportiveschools.org).

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