




Morgridge Office Researcher/Practitioner Partnership Accelerator Grant Cover Page

Applicant Information					
	Last name	First name	Position	Email	Signature
1	Wright	Paul	Professor (KNPE)	pwright@niu.edu	
2	Ricklefs	Mariana	Assistant Professor (CI)	mricklefs@niu.edu	See email for e-signature
3	Ressler	Jim	Associate Professor (KNPE)	jressler@niu.edu	See email for e-signature
4	Shiver	Victoria	Visiting Assistant Professor (KNPE)	vshiver@niu.edu	See email for e-signature
5	Martinez-Arroyo	Elvira	Graduate Student (CI)	elviraarroyo@gmail.com	See email for e-signature
Project Information					
Project Title		A research-practice partnership to promote transformative social and emotional learning through K-12 physical education			
An overview of the project (approx. 50 words):					
<p>This partnership will expand a mutually beneficial collaboration between the College of Education and the U-46 school district in Elgin. The inter-departmental team will work with administrators and teachers to design, implement, and evaluate a year-long professional development initiative focused on developing culturally responsive pedagogies for addressing social and emotional learning in physical education.</p>					
Budget total		\$20,000	Request for advisor(s)		No

Department Endorsement

Mark the applicant number in the parentheses:

CI (2), Signature of the Chair: Sally Blake

KNPE (3), Signature of the Chair: _____

If planning to submit to external grants as a result of this project,


Funding type	Funding source	Mechanism	Submission date
External Contracts	U.S. Department of Education, Title II Funds	Success in this project will position us to contract with other districts to provide similar professional development, evaluation, and consultation services.	After June 2022; rolling opportunity
Research Grant	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	The “ <i>Evidence for action: Investigator-initiated research to build a culture of health</i> ” grant program is focused on scalable projects that can promote overall well-being and equity in health outcomes for children, especially those from marginalized communities.	After June 2022; rolling opportunity

Start the project narrative on the next page (no more than five single-spaced pages).

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Morgridge Office Researcher/Practitioner Partnership Accelerator Grant Project Narrative

1. Project Goals & Significance

We are excited to submit this Morgridge Researcher/Practitioner Partnership Accelerator Grant (MRPAG) application with the overarching goal of promoting transformative social and emotional learning (SEL) through K-12 physical education (PE). The College of Education (COE) has an ongoing partnership with the U-46 school district in Elgin. This partnership involves professional development (PD) related to social justice, bilingual education, and culturally responsive pedagogy. However, the PD provided by NIU has focused on the classroom setting. According to U-46 Student Wellness Curriculum Coordinator, Tracey Jakaitis, the 150 PE teachers throughout the district need PD tailored to their unique setting (see support letter). Because PE is dynamic, physically active, and social by nature, it affords a rich opportunity to address the whole child (Hellison, 2011). Best practice in this setting involves specialized activities, pedagogical strategies, and opportunities to address physical health that district-wide PD's do not typically cover (Santillan, Jacobs & Wright, 2015; Walsh & Wright, 2016).

According to Ms. Jakaitis, the most pressing needs for PE teachers in U-46 relate to engagement, mental health, trauma, cultural and linguistic diversity, and school safety. These needs and a lack of connection have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social reckoning around issues such as racism and health disparities. The district's desire to focus on these issues aligns with a broad framework for SEL that addresses competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (see www.casel.org). Research indicates that SEL programs support positive outcomes related to personal and social skills, mental and emotional well-being, avoidance of risky behaviors, and academic success (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). While it is argued that SEL should be promoted in PE (Dyson, Hawley & Wright, 2020; Jacobs & Wright, 2014; Wright & Irwin, 2018), best practice and proven programs for supporting teachers to do so are lacking (Wright, Gray & Gordon, 2020; Wright, Gray & Richards, 2020).

Despite widespread support for SEL, this movement has often ignored issues such as social inequity, culture, and linguistic differences (Jagers, Rivas-Drake & Williams, 2019). This has led to a call to integrate such topics in SEL programs to foster critical thinking and address student's varied realities. This approach, called transformative SEL (Williams & Jagers, 2020), is especially relevant to the proposed project. U-46 is a large diverse school district serving approximately 38,400 students. More than half (60.6%) of students are economically disadvantaged and approximately one-third (33.5%) are English Learners/Emergent Bilinguals. In fact, just over one-half (52%) of students live in Spanish speaking homes. The vast majority of students belong to the following racial/ethnic groups: Hispanic/Latinx (54.9%), White (26%), Asia/Pacific Islander (8.3%), and Black/African American (6.3%). The proposed PD initiative will address the needs of teachers, students and families in this district and allow us to develop a relevant, timely and culturally responsive approach that can be disseminated.

The timing for this MRPAG is particularly relevant. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the delivery of PE, but also heightened teachers' awareness of students' needs related to SEL, mental

health, and engagement. The 2021-2022 academic year is an opportune time to reinvent the culture of PE in this district, to retain the focus on the whole student and their social context, and to create spaces in PE to explore issues of culture and equity. This research-practice partnership will enable our research team to work with practitioners to tackle these challenges in practice.

2. Research questions

The research component of this project will address a range of questions and employ multiple methods. Teacher-driven action research components of this initiative require an emergent design, but the guiding research questions for the overall project are:

- How do educational stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, parents) in a large, diverse public school district currently view the role of SEL in PE?
- How can SEL be integrated into a large, diverse public school district in culturally responsive and transformative ways?
- What impact can a customized professional development initiative have on PE teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and teaching practice related to transformative SEL?
- How can changes in teacher practice focused on transformational SEL support students' overall well-being and engagement in PE?
- How can such an initiative involve parents and families to promote health equity?

3. Methodological Details - Design and Implementation Strategy

All 150 PE teachers in U-46 will participate in PD components in the 2021-2022 academic year. This will include face to face and virtual modules. Ms. Jakaitis is willing to devote the full and half-day teacher institute days to this initiative. She indicates the most effective ways to engage teachers and maximize relevance will be to run concurrent trainings for elementary and secondary level teachers. Each training will introduce the same core principles and transformative SEL framework, but examples, practical sessions, and action planning will focus on the appropriate grade level. Further customization will be made by asking teachers to inform decisions regarding the selection of specific topics to be further developed (e.g., instructional models, trauma informed practice, adapted physical education). Feedback surveys will be administered to assess satisfaction, learning, and action plans after large-scale PD sessions. Valid and reliable surveys will be administered to all teachers at baseline and the end of the year to assess changes in self-efficacy for teaching personal and social skills (Martin et al., 2008) and curricular value orientations related to equity and social justice (Chen, Ennis & Loftus, 1997).

We will recruit approximately 20 (10 elementary and 10 secondary) teachers to engage more meaningfully throughout the year. These teachers will receive additional support as they engage in action research projects and share their learning with peers in a community of practice (Walsh & Wright, 2016). In addition, these teachers will participate in interviews and focus groups; and we will observe their teaching practice relative to SEL using a systematic observation tool (Escarti et al., 2015) that has proven useful in similar projects (Coulson, Irwin & Wright, 2012; Escarti, Llopis-Roig & Wright, 2018; Hemphill, Templin & Wright, 2015; Wright & Irwin, 2018). Parents and students within these teachers' classes will be recruited to participate in research activities as well. Interviews and focus groups will be semi-structured and informed by protocols that have proven useful in other studies of stakeholder perspectives on SEL in PE

(Wright & Irwin, 2018; Wright, Gray & Richards, 2020) and classroom settings (Warren, Presberry & Louis, 2020). Valid and reliable surveys related to a wide range of developmental experiences will be administered to students at the secondary level. These include the Youth Experiences Survey 2.0 (Hansen & Larson, 2005) which addresses topics such as identity exploration, motivation, leadership and responsibility, and working with diverse groups.

4. Expected Outcomes

Regarding the full population of PE teachers in U-46, we expect to see high levels of satisfaction and engagement with the PD experiences, increased understanding of transformative SEL and how it can be promoted in PE, increased self-efficacy for teaching personal and social skills, as well as a greater appreciation for curricular value orientations related to equity and social justice. Regarding the subset of PE teachers who engage in action research as part of a community of practice, we expect to see substantial change in the ways they plan, implement, and assess SEL with their classes. We also expect to see increases in positive developmental experiences among their students and their engagement with SEL competencies. Positive results demonstrating the effectiveness and relevance of this PD initiative will position us to secure contracts from other districts who may wish to devote Title II funding to address SEL and related issues.

In select classes, working with teachers in the community of practice, we will examine implications of this initiative for promoting health equity. We expect to see positive influences on students' engagement in and attitudes about their PE experience. We also hope to involve parents and families from marginalized communities in conversations about health awareness, nutrition and physical activity, and health disparities. Beyond students' affective engagement in PE, we will monitor moderate to vigorous physical activity levels, motivation to be physically active, as well as self-reported physical activity outside of school. Student level data of this type from a few class sections will provide sufficient data for a power analyses to inform a follow up grant proposal to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

In terms of partnership development, this project will include a group of teachers, subject area, and setting in initiatives that are already a major focal point for COE collaboration with U-46. For our PE teacher licensure program, increased collaboration with U-46 will enhance opportunities to place student teachers and for our alumni to find opportunities for networking. For the PE and Wellness division at U-46, this will be an opportunity to receive cutting edge PD tailored to meet the needs of the district, teachers and the communities they serve.

Finally, the data gathered in this study will make a significant contribution to our ongoing international study of SEL in PE. Data have already been gathered (N = 3,700) using many of these same methods and tools from four secondary schools in Scotland, three in New Zealand, and two in the U.S. While this study has inherent value on its own, the ability to grow the data set will be of great research value.

5. Project team and Partnership (specify relevant expertise and roles in the project)

Dr. Paul Wright is the Lane/Zimmerman Endowed Professor in Kinesiology and Physical Education as well a Presidential Engagement Professor at NIU. He is an internationally

recognized expert in promoting SEL through PE and the lead editor on the first textbook to be published on this topic. Throughout his career, Dr. Wright has conducted research in partnership with schools and community agencies focused on equity and meeting the needs of youth from marginalized communities. He has extensive experience as a practitioner and as a facilitator of PD for teachers and coaches. Dr. Wright will serve as the principal investigator drawing upon extensive experience leading research teams and projects funded by agencies such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the U.S. Department of State. He will oversee and direct project personnel, manage the budget, and meet reporting requirements. He will also coordinate the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the entire project.

Dr. Mariana Ricklefs is an Assistant Professor in the ESL and Bilingual Education Program of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Her teaching experience, certification, and graduate school training include literacy, ESL, bilingual education, and special education. She is Latina and bilingual herself. Her research interests include assessment and teaching of bilingual and multilingual students, bilingual special education, language teacher education, sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis, multicultural education, equity, and social justice. Her contributions to this project will involve consultation on cultural and linguistic aspects of the PD initiative and corresponding research. Dr. Ricklefs will support the facilitation of focus groups in Spanish, translation of materials and transcriptions, etc. She will also direct the efforts of our graduate student and other student-volunteers from CI.

Dr. Jim Ressler is an Associate Professor and director of the Physical Education Teacher Education in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education. A former PE teacher himself, Dr. Ressler is adept at striking the balance between research and practice. The major focus of his research is teacher development with a strong emphasis on the affective domain, student-centered pedagogies, and social justice. Dr. Ressler has strong connections with PE coordinators and teachers in many districts. He partners with them to place PE teacher candidates in clinical placements, provide professional development, and conduct research. He has worked closely with Dr. Wright previously on funded training programs (e.g., Belize and Sri Lanka) and building thriving research-practice partnerships (e.g., West Aurora school district). Dr. Ressler will support all aspects of the project with a special emphasis on building and maintaining our relationship with the district and individual teachers.

Dr. Victoria Shiver is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education. She is a teacher educator and has experience supporting in-service and pre-service PE teachers. She has worked in a number of different cultural contexts and conducted her own action research in practice. Dr. Shiver is specialized in the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR; Hellison, 2011) model which is a recognized best practice for promoting affective development and SEL in PE. She will actively support all aspects of the project with an emphasis on delivering PD content and supporting teachers involved in action research components. She will also recruit and supervise KNPE student-volunteers as research assistants.

Elvira Martinez-Arroyo is a graduate student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the Reading Program. She is a Special Education Teacher and K-3 Case Manager at Conrad Fisher School. Based on her academic training and professional experience, Elvira is well suited to support Dr. Ricklefs work on the project. Because Elvira is Latina and bilingual, she will be

able to support activities such as parent interviews, focus groups, and transcriptions that involve Spanish language expertise.

Tracey Jakaitis is the Student Wellness Curriculum Coordinator for U-46. She and her staff will be crucial partners on the district side to help shape the planning, delivery, and evaluation of this initiative. As reflected in the attached letter, we have her support for this project. She will assist us in communication with the teachers, scheduling and hosting events using district facilities, securing and distributing equipment and instructional materials, recruiting teachers to engage in action research projects, case studies, and leading a community of practice. Several recent alumni from NIU K-12 PE licensure program now work as PE teachers in U-46 and have expressed interest in being involved in such collaborations. Tracey will be actively involved in fostering their involvement and leadership in creating a sustainable community of practice.

6. Itemized budget details

The budget request is \$20,000. These funds will support summer salary for the research team, stipends for additional personnel, and training materials. Itemized budget details are as follows:

Faculty salary: \$12,000. Drs. Ricklefs, Ressler and Shiver will receive stipends of \$1,500 in the second half of summer 2021 and again in the first half of summer 2022. Dr. Wright, as principal investigator, will receive a higher stipend of \$3,000 but only in the summer 2022. These costs have been kept to a minimum because all faculty members have waived a request for local travel as well as compensation during the 2021-2022 academic year. They will count their effort on the project as part of their regular service and research agendas. Moreover, Dr. Wright is waiving any compensation request in summer 2021.

Graduate student salary: \$2,500. Ms. Martinez-Arroyo will be paid \$1,250 in the second half of summer 2021 and again in the first half of summer 2022. These costs are being kept to a minimum because we anticipate involving her and other research assistants from both departments during the 2021-2022 academic year using mechanisms such as volunteering and credit-bearing independent studies.

Additional personnel: \$2,200. We anticipate inviting up to 11 additional experts over the course of the year to deliver face to face sessions or prepare virtual resources depending on participant interest. We will offer a stipend of \$200 for each contribution.

Materials and facilities: \$3,300. There is a comprehensive forthcoming textbook on SEL in PE that will be the most suitable resource for teachers in this project. We hope to purchase one book for the PE program at each of the 57 schools in the district. Moreover, personal copies will be offered as an incentive to teachers who wish to become more involved in the community of practice and/or research components. At the bulk rate, we anticipate the cost per book at \$55. We request \$3,300 to purchase the first 60 books. As a cost sharing measure, Ms. Jakaitis could likely purchase an additional 20 books through the district with a value of \$1,100. The district will also provide training materials (pens, notebooks, etc.) and facilities (e.g., gyms, classrooms) at no cost to us that have a value of approximately \$600 and \$800, respectively.

7. References

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Letter of Support from U-46



School District U-46

Education Service Center

355 E. Chicago St., Elgin, IL 60120-6543

Tel: 847.888.5000 x5007

Fax: 847.608.4173

Tony Sanders, Superintendent

www.u-46.org

February, 5, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tracey Jakaitis, and I am the Student Wellness Curriculum Coordinator for Elgin School District U-46. I have been discussing the Professional Development needs of the Physical Education teachers in Elgin U-46 with Drs. Jim Ressler and Paul Wright. Our district has 57 schools and within those schools we have 150 Physical Education teachers. One of the greatest professional needs we have at this time is in the area of Social Emotional Learning. I am very interested in working with the experts at NIU to provide the Physical Education teachers in U-46 with customized, year-long, professional development focused on Social and Emotional Learning that is tailored to the interests, and needs of the elementary and secondary PE teachers in U-46. These sessions would be a great fit in our district PD plan and could be offered as required large group concepts and optional smaller group sessions specific to the needs of the teachers at the different grade levels. I look forward to hearing more about this opportunity and continuing to collaborate with NIU to support your student growth as well as our teacher growth.

Sincerely,

Tracey Jakaitis

School District U-46

Student Wellness Curriculum Coordinator

Email Confirmations from NIU Team Members to Serve as Electronic Signatures

Re: Morgridge accelerator grant proposal

Mariana Ricklefs <mricklefs@niu.edu>

Mon 2/15/2021 11:12 AM

To: Paul Wright <pwright@niu.edu>; Jim Ressler <jressler@niu.edu>; Tracey Jakaitis <traceyjakaitis@u-46.org>; Victoria Shiver <vshiver@niu.edu>; Elvira Martinez-Arroyo <elviraarroyo@gmail.com>

Dear Dr. Wright,

This email is to confirm that I have seen the proposal for the Morgridge Research/Practice Accelerator Grant and that I want to be part of this proposal/project.

Thank you for including me in this team.

I am looking forward to working with all of you.

Best regards,

--Mariana.

Mariana Alvayero Ricklefs, Ph. D.



Assistant Professor - ESL/Bilingual Education
Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education
Northern Illinois University
1425. W. Lincoln Hwy. DeKalb, IL 60155

From: Paul Wright <pwright@niu.edu>

Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2021 8:21 AM

To: Jim Ressler <jressler@niu.edu>; Tracey Jakaitis <traceyjakaitis@u-46.org>; Victoria Shiver <vshiver@niu.edu>; Mariana Ricklefs <mricklefs@niu.edu>; Elvira Martinez-Arroyo <elviraarroyo@gmail.com>

Subject: Morgridge accelerator grant proposal

Good morning everyone,

This may be a disappointing first message to receive on Valentine's Day, but I hope you'll forgive me.

Attached is a full proposal for the Morgridge Research/Practice Accelerator Grant we have been working on. The proposal is due tomorrow, but time is not specified so I imagine we have until the end of day. I feel this is in good shape and have already had detailed edits from Tori and Mariana. Still, I would gladly address any questions or entertain any suggestions for improvement that you can provide.

I apologize again for the short timeframe and certainly understand if you don't get to this immediately. However, with or without edits, please reply to this email during business hours tomorrow and confirm that you have seen and want to be part of this proposal. Dr. Pitney said that email chain would suffice for signatures, so we don't all have to sign, scan, and pass around the signature page.

Thanks so much and Happy Valentine's Day!

Paul

Re: Morgridge accelerator grant proposal

Victoria Shiver <vshiver@niu.edu>

Mon 2/15/2021 8:10 AM

To: Paul Wright <pwright@niu.edu>

Paul,

I am not sure if you need an additional email from me for the email chain for signatures, but if so - I have reviewed the proposal again and I am eager to be a part of it and see it move forward.

Thank you for putting all of this together and for including me!

-Tori

Victoria Shiver, PhD
Visiting Assistant Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education
Anderson Hall 226
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois 60115
Pronouns: she/her/hers

From: Paul Wright <pwright@niu.edu>

Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2021 8:21 AM

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Paul

Re: Morgridge accelerator grant proposal

Elvira Martinez-Arroyo <elviraarroyo@gmail.com>

Mon 2/15/2021 9:25 AM

To: Jim Ressler <jressler@niu.edu>

Cc: Paul Wright <pwright@niu.edu>; Tracey Jakaitis <traceyjakaitis@u-46.org>; Victoria Shiver <vshiver@niu.edu>; Mariana Ricklefs <mricklefs@niu.edu>

Good morning,

I have read the proposal and would like to be part of it.

Thanks,

On Mon, Feb 15, 2021 at 9:00 AM Jim Ressler <jressler@niu.edu> wrote:

Hi Paul,

I have seen and would like to be part of the proposal.

Thanks!

Jim

James D. Ressler, Ph.D.

Associate Professor | Department of KNPE

Program Director | Physical Education Teacher Education

Anderson Hall 227 | DeKalb, IL 60115

jressler@niu.edu

<http://cedu.niu.edu/knpe/about/faculty-and-instructors/ressler-jim.shtml>

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Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2021 8:21 AM

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