Year 1 Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) Curriculum Implementation in Warner Elementary and Shortlidge Academy

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Abstract
Recent insights from dissemination and implementation science reveal that many school factors influence the success of new program implementation. It is important to measure these factors to address potential problems interfering with implementation. In Fall 2017, the Red Clay Consolidated School District, New Castle County Delaware began implementation of Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum, a universal prevention program aimed at increasing socioemotional skills, decreasing problem behaviors, and promoting academic success. The present evaluation sampled two of the four schools trained in PATHS, with aims to understand teacher-identified strengths and challenges of implementation, and to identify potential changes in these reports across the school year. A mixed-method approach included teacher ratings of various aspects of program implementation and open-ended responses to clarify ratings and provide end-of-year opinions. Due to limited participation, results primarily reflect reports from one school. Teacher reports revealed a general concern of time for implementation and strengths in peer and administrative support. By the end of the school year, reports reflected a strong positive perspective about PATHS from about 64% of responding teachers from Shortlidge Academy; the two teachers from Warner Elementary who completed the end-of-year survey also demonstrated favor for PATHS. Responses highlighted a desire to grow the PATHS climate exemplified through questions of how to implement with children with identified behavioral problems and for use with non-homeroom teachers. Recommendations for next year’s implementation and evaluation incorporate teacher suggestions.