

## MARISHA HUMPHRIES



*Associate Professor,  
Educational Psychology, UIC*  
Bio: <http://bit.ly/N1rdj0>

## CASSANDRA MCKAY-JACKSON



*Associate Professor,  
Jane Addams College of  
Social Work, UIC*  
Bio: <http://bit.ly/10FPV4K>

### IRRPP:

- funds research
- trains scholars to join policy discussions
- collaborates on social justice projects with community organizations
- hosts events

## TRAINING SCHOOL STAFF IN SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

### Introduction

How can student teachers and school social worker interns learn to support their students' social emotional development and positive racial identity? The majority of students in both the social work and urban elementary education programs at UIC are White women, many of whom have little experience with communities of color. Yet they are being prepared to work in Chicago Public Schools, whose students are 85% African American and Latino. Research shows that teachers and school staff who empathize with their culturally and economically diverse students are stronger advocates for those same students and are better able to communicate with these students. Furthermore, students' emotional and social competence has been linked to increased academic achievement and positive peer relationships. These positive results are more likely when student teachers and social workers work together to understand how race influences students' development. However, collaborative efforts among new teachers and school social workers addressing social and emotional learning (SEL) are minimal. This project aims to develop a collaborative pre-service training for teachers and school social work interns to support students' social and emotional abilities while integrating race.

### Methods

The investigators designed and delivered a multidisciplinary pre-service training in SEL for UIC students that focused on race and class. The group training occurred over six sessions, each lasting two hours. A post-training focus group took place after the final training session to assess the student teachers' and social work interns' understandings of SEL.

### Findings

*Before* the training both student teachers and school social work interns:

- were unclear of the other's role in delivering and supporting SEL.
- did not understand that students' diversity is a major aspect of SEL.
- were disconnected from how their students' racial and cultural status impacted their school and life experiences.

*After* the training both student teachers and school social work interns:

- saw SEL not as an event or task, but rather as a framework for empowering students.
- need more explicit training in SEL. They struggled with how to deliver SEL and balance other professional demands.

### Recommendations

Both the urban elementary and school social work programs need better incorporation and reinforcement of SEL knowledge into coursework. This explicit, SEL training should be delivered by way of a cross-college, formal course to understand how race, ethnicity, class, and culture influence SEL. To promote collaboration between school social workers and teachers, student teachers and school social work interns should be placed in the same schools for their pre-service training.



# RESEARCH AT IRRPP

**UIC** UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT CHICAGO Institute for Research  
on Race and Public Policy **10**  
YEARS

## For more research...

Read other IRRPP funded reports, with topics including education, incarceration, immigration, and more!

Learn more on our website.

[irrpp.uic.edu](http://irrpp.uic.edu)