

Tulane professor gets \$2.6 million to study trauma in NOLA students

October 28, 2015 11:45 AM Barri Bronston
bbronst@tulane.edu
504-314-7444

A Tulane University psychology professor and a team of community partners will spend the next four years in New Orleans public schools as part of a first-of-its-kind study to determine the best ways to meet the needs of trauma-exposed students.

The study, which will be led by Stacy Overstreet, chair of psychology at Tulane, is being funded by a \$2.6 million grant from the [National Institute of Justice](#).

Researchers will implement strategies that aim to transform schools into trauma-sensitive learning environments that better address the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students exposed to trauma.

“In New Orleans and other urban areas, children are regularly exposed to trauma, and it's important to have all adults in the school understand the educational implications of such exposure,” [Overstreet](#) said.

Six schools will be randomly selected from Firstline and ReNew schools to participate in the study.

Overstreet will conduct the study with Courtney Baker, assistant professor of psychology at Tulane, and several community partners, including the Children's Bureau of New Orleans, Project Fleur de Lis, Strategies for Youth Development LLC and the Louisiana Public Health Institute. All are members of the Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative, a program of the New Orleans Health Department that also includes partnerships with the Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies and the Metropolitan Human Services District.

Overstreet said the study is the first of its kind.

“Schools across the country are rushing to scale up implementation of trauma-informed approaches as a way to create physically and psychologically safe

environments for all students. However, no controlled studies have demonstrated the impact of trauma-informed care as a way to improve school safety.”

Overstreet said the findings will provide some of the first rigorous data on the impact of trauma-informed approaches on such issues as disciplinary referrals, bullying, victimization and suspensions and expulsions.