

Abstract

In the Triangulating Success: Mindsets, Middle School, and Mathematics Project (TSM³), Vassar Public Schools of Vassar, Michigan will partner with the Institute for Excellence in Education of Mount Pleasant, Michigan to integrate the development of non-cognitive skills of middle-grades students in order to achieve increased academic achievement. The quasi-experimental project will implement, evaluate, and refine the tools and processes of the Focused Instructional Model (FIM), a research-based mathematical instructional method developed by the Institute for Excellence in Education (IEE), designed to improve students' non-cognitive skills and provide a framework of success for high-needs students.

For the TSM³ project, schools in Tuscola County with Vassar Public Schools as the lead, will participate as project and control schools in IEEs work to develop students' non-cognitive skills and share their emerging practices. Project schools will implement FIM, receive professional development and coaching on high-quality middle-grades practices and implementing non-cognitive skills in mathematics classrooms. An online learning community (eFIM) will be available to project schools to communicate with colleagues; access resources on non-cognitive skills, FIM, and high-quality instruction; and participate in e-community meetings. In the third year of the project, control schools will receive the treatment, access to eFIM and coaching services.

As a project partner, IEE will leverage its partnership with the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform to provide Vassar and neighboring schools in Tuscola County with access to the Schools to Watch rubric and professional development on high-quality middle-grades instructional practices. Additionally, the Center for Prevention

Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois will be conducting the independent evaluation and providing feedback.