**Paper 3: Measures to Guide Professional Development to Promote Supportive Middle School Contexts: Directed Consultation, Scouting Reports, and Teachers’ Professional Networks**

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**Abstract**

During the middle school years, students experience considerable developmental change and growth. The context of the middle school can foster students’ adaptation or present significant challenges that constrain their adjustment. Further, middle school students tend to establish a classroom society that involves the continual negotiation of values, norms, beliefs, social roles, and peer affiliations. With funding from the Institute of Education Sciences, the Supporting Early Adolescent Learning and Social Success (SEALS) program was designed as a professional development model to help teachers promote classroom contexts that are responsive to the developmental needs of all students. The SEALS model involves a range of training content and strategies that focus on managing the instructional, behavioral, and social aspects of the classroom ecology in a synergistic manner that is responsive to the strengths and needs of specific schools, classrooms, students, and teachers. To do this it was necessary to create a professional development delivery model, directed consultation, to apply a person-in-context perspective to the intervention process. Directed consultation involves simultaneously addressing standard core intervention goals while also being flexible to be tailored or adapted to the unique and dynamic characteristics of the classroom society and the individual students that are embedded within them.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and present preliminary data about two measurement approaches that help to guide the directed consultation professional development process. First, the **scouting report** has been developed as a classroom observational and interview framework for tailoring universal interventions and also for helping teachers address specific problems that require intensive and individualized intervention approaches. The focus of the scouting report is to determine intervention needs and strategies by clarifying: specific circumstances and resources available to address it; primary points of leverage that are most likely to result in a successful outcome; and potential problems that could arise during intervention. This information is used to establish a game plan that is solution oriented and can be implemented with available resources.

The second measurement approach involves assessing teachers’ professional networks within the school. One aspect of the directed consultation approach is to utilize the middle school team structure in ways that allow teachers to serve as consultants and support for each other. Therefore, as part of the SEALS research program, a complementary study was established with funding from the W.T. Grant Foundation to evaluate whether the SEALS program can improve
the effectiveness of teacher networks. Data from this ongoing study entitled “Project NTACT-Networks of Teachers Affect Children in Transition” are being examined to determine how teachers’ network dynamics can be leveraged to support the effective implementation of context level interventions in the middle school ecology. The potential interplay between the Scouting Report and NTACT measurement approaches will also be discussed.