

Executive Summary – District of Innovation Work Streams
Updated June 5, 2019

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District Goals [DG] for 2018-2019

1. Increase student achievement across the District
2. Provide a safe, secure and orderly environment in all schools
3. Attract and retain all stakeholders
4. Maintain sound financial stability
5. Develop a vision for college and career readiness

TPSD Greatest Needs [GN]

1. **Achievement Gap Closure** – Address the achievement gap of underserved students including students in poverty, EL, and SPED; Create targeted programs to meet all needs
2. **Staffing** – Revisit the staffing structure at the elementary level and class structure, Increase diversity of staff, Revisit EL staffing
3. **Social Emotional Supports** – Increase wrap around services, Utilize trauma informed care, Offer more counseling services, Address bullying / conflict resolution / character education
4. **Career Oriented Pathways** – Create clear career oriented pathways, Educate students and parents on options, Increase organizational partnerships and opportunities, Focus on employability skills
- 4a. **Testing vs. Soft Skills** – Decrease focus on state standardized testing, Shift focus to ACT / AP exam prep, Create developmentally appropriate soft skill based curriculum at all grades
- 4b. **Communication and Community** – Strengthen public relations, Increase parent and family involvement through streamlined communication at school and grade levels, Share tools for parents to help students including videos and online links

District of Innovation Strategic Planning and Development – All Encompassing

Dr. Picou and Ms. McMillan have started meeting on the strategic planning and development of the District of Innovation process. As an initial though, Ms. McMillan is focused on the District of Innovation application prioritizing a college and career readiness focus across all grade levels with an initial breakdown of the following:

- **Pre-K – 5th grade** – Career Opportunities
- **6th – 8th grade** – Career Exploration
- **9th – 12th grade** – Career Enhancement

Please see below for the draft timeline related to the District of Innovation application development, revision, and finalization:

- **June 19-21** – Strategic planning meeting for the Directors, Principals, and Assistant Principals; Focus on college and career readiness across every level and the direct connection with the 5th TPSD board goal
- **July 16 from 1:00-4:00 pm** - Strategic planning meeting with Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Dr. English, Dr. Thomas, and Ms. McMillan [Ms. Britton and Ms. Ferguson at CHAMPS]

- **July 25-26 / July 29-30** – Strategic planning meeting with Principals and Assistant Principals
- **August 5-30** – District of Innovation plan writing time
- **August 31** – Letter of Intent submitted to MDE
- **September 10** – District of Innovation plan initial presentation to the TPSD school board
- **September 11-27** – Community presentation and feedback phase of District of Innovation process; Request and Collect Community Letters of Support; Update District of Innovation application
- **October 8** – District of Innovation plan final presentation at the TPSD school board meeting for approval
- **November 1** – District of Innovation plan submission deadline [Moved to December 3 in the 2018 plan, but I am moving forward with the November 1 timeline]
- **December 2019** – District of Innovation interview with the MDE team
- **February 2020** – District of Innovation presentation before the Mississippi State Board of Education
- **March 2020** – Notification of District of Innovation status at the Mississippi State Board of Education

Project SEARCH – DG 3/5, TPSD GN 1/4/4a

Project SEARCH is focused on preparing young people with significant disabilities for success in integrated, competitive employment. The Project SEARCH model in Tupelo involves a partnership with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), North Mississippi Health Services (NMHS), and the Tupelo Public School District (TPSD). Logistically, this program involves special education students with severe cognitive disabilities finishing their high school career onsite at the North Mississippi Medical Center with the support of a teacher and the opportunity to participate in internships at the hospital that would ideally turn into viable employment opportunities. The Project SEARCH program will have 9 students for the 2019-2020 school year, and Susan Dudley will serve as the Project SEARCH Teacher / Transition Coordinator.

The MDRS/NMHS/TPSD MOU was approved at the March 19th board meeting, and the MOU was finalized with the MDRS and NMHS official signatures on May 15. The TPSD team was hard at work prior to the end of the school year to make sure the students' IEPs were all updated, and the MDRS team has been working to finalize the open MDRS cases. The next steps require Susan Dudley working on her CDL license and the students working to meet all hospital outlined requirements – background check, drug test, tb test, and immunizations. The press release and kick off promotional event for this program have been confirmed for Monday, August 5. Please mark your calendar for 10:00-11:00 am on Monday, August 5 as the NMHS, MDRS, and TPSD leadership will all be present with media to formally recognize this program.

Middle College - DG 3/5, TPSD GN 1/4/4a

The Tupelo Public School District team is creating a middle college with Itawamba Community College, starting with a soft pilot in the 2019-2020 school year, and the official MOU for this partnership was finalized at the May 14th board meeting. The current focus of the middle college work is to make sure all parameters are in place so that a student in the middle college can both graduate from high school and pursue an Associate's degree. Ms. McMillan is bringing before the board the promotional flyer and the social contract to set clear expectations related to this program.

Middle College Meetings Since May 6 [Last Executive Summary Submission]

1. **May 13** – ICC / TPSD Communications Planning Meeting
 - a. The ICC Communications and Community Relations team met with the TPSD team to check-in on the outlined priorities from their initial meeting at the end of April. Please see these outlined below:
 - i. **Branding & Logo** – Reviewed the information provided as a brainstorming resource in the draft flyer related to the name and potential catch phrase.
 - ii. **Flyer** – Reviewed the draft flyer. Work to get feedback from Dr. Sumerel to confirm the content related to enrollment and the course of study.
 - iii. **Communication Timeline** – Brainstormed a communication timeline to roll out with local media.
2. **May 14** – TPSD Board Meeting for MOU and Middle College Counselor hire
3. **May 21** – Collegiate Academy School Visit
 - a. Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Dr. English, Mr. Dobbs, Mr. McNeal, and Ms. McMillan visited Collegiate Academy, the Middle College partnership between the Gulfport School District and Mississippi Gulf coast Community College, in order to see a middle college in action and learn from their experience.

Middle College Upcoming Meetings

1. **June 6** – College and Career Readiness Training
 - a. Ms. McMillan and the THS Counselors are attending the MDE training on the College and Career readiness requirements.
2. **June 7** – Tyler Philly Meeting
 - a. Ms. McMillan is meeting with Tyler Philley, the Middle College / Secondary Counselor, to get him up to speed on the middle college work and to provide updated resources.
3. **June 24 / 25** – Middle College Community Meeting for Eligible Students
 - a. Ms. McMillan has recommended that eligible students receive a letter and finalized promotional flyer related to the middle college. A community meeting could help to provide an overview of the middle college and opportunity to dive into the social contract that provides clear expectations related to this program.
4. **June 24 / 25 or July 15-19** – Industry Meetings related to middle college funding
 - a. Ms. McMillan has recommended that Dr. Picou, Mr. Ellis, and other planning team members would like to host industry meetings with CDF, CREATE, Toyota,

and North Mississippi Health Services to pitch the middle college model and pitch the funding support request related to tuition or partial tuition.

5. **July 8-12** – Individual Eligibility and Interest Meetings
 - a. Mr. Philley will work to connect with students and parents that are eligible and interested in the program to answer additional questions and offer support with registering for the middle college program.
6. **July 15-19** – Enrollment meeting with ICC Team
 - a. Ms. McMillan has recommended the TPSD and ICC teams meet to align on the students who will participate in the middle college for the 2019-2020 school year.

Ms. McMillan will potentially bring recommendations related to board policy to the July 31 board meeting. Additionally, she will look forward to sharing at this time the students who have committed to participating in this program.

Project Lead the Way – DG 3/5, TPSD GN 1/4/4a

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is a nonprofit organization that develops STEM curriculum focused on three pathways – engineering, computer science, and biomedical science. The TPSD implementation plan involves one PLTW Launch module in all gifted classes in the four 3rd through 5th grade schools in the fall of 2019. During the spring semester of 2020, the implementation is another PLTW Launch module in either the STEM lab, technology lab, or media center as a part of the specials rotation.

The identified Project Lead the Way gifted and specials teachers were trained on Tuesday, May 28 and Wednesday, May 29 at the Toyota Blue springs plant by two PLTW Master Teachers. The goal of this training was to prepare the teachers to teach any of the Pre-K through 5th grade Project Lead the Way modules in the three strands – Engineering, BioMedical Science, and Computer Science. The teachers worked through a kindergarten biomedical science module called “Structure and Function: Human Body,” a 2nd grade computer science module called Grids and Games,” and a 3rd grade engineering module called “Stability and Motion: Forces and Interactions.” The teachers now have the foundational skills to be able to teach any modules, including the identified modules that match up with the MCCRS power standards. Ms. McMillan and Mr. Ellis were able to garner a strong social media presence on the training, and the Project Lead the Way team has requested that the TPSD team write a blog for the PLTW website based on the success of this training. She will make sure to include the link to the blog in the July Executive Summary.

Concurrently with the training logistics, there is a significant amount of behind the scenes work to make sure this program can be implemented with fidelity. Mr. Higgins on the technology team offered support with making sure that the necessary applications were force installed on all the 5190 Chromebooks at the 3rd through 5th grade schools in advance of the training. McMillan is working to make sure the classroom space is identified and the teachers can provide feedback on the best storage materials structure for their respective rooms. She is also working to lock in the next implementation planning call with the PLTW team to make sure the appropriate management structure is in place for the next school year and all upcoming processes, like

rostering students, are clear. After July 15, ordering supplies and rostering students will be the most significant priorities.

TPSD Discovery – DG 1, TPSD GN 1/4/4a/4b

The TPSD Discovery program [previously called Blast Off to Big School in July 2018] is a summer program designed for children who have not previously been to a structured educational environment leading up to kindergarten that is fully funded by the Toyota Wellspring Education Fund. This early childhood programming targets 40 students to bolster their academic knowledge and behavior expectations in advance of starting kindergarten. Logistically, this programming will take place in July at ECEC, and it will be fully staffed with a lead teacher, two certified teachers, and four assistant teachers. The teachers will utilize the lesson plans from last year and build off this work to better meet the needs of the new group of students.

The TPSD Discovery team has tried to learn and expand upon the focus of the program last year in three distinct ways. First, the team has a goal of reaching 40 students instead of 25 students last summer (17 attended). Second, the planning team has translated the registration form into Spanish and Arabic with corresponding recruitment plans to target each of these communities. Finally, the lead teachers are committed to meeting with the students to administer a pre-test the week of June 24-28 so that we can have accurate data of the growth achieved as a result of this program and not utilize time during the program for this purpose. We look forward to the positive impact associated with these substantive changes.

The TPSD Discovery team would like to provide updates on the enrollment and key timelines. Eighteen students have registered as of June 5, and the deadline for registration is on June 14. The camp itself will take place from July 8-July 19, and the board members are welcome to connect with Stewart McMillan if they would like to observe the program during this time. The Toyota Wellspring Education Fund committee members will tentatively be visiting the program on July 16 or 17.

Hanover Research Process – Alignment contingent on project

The TPSD team has partnered with Hanover Research group to research evidence based practices related to key research questions. Dr. Picou, Ms. Britton, Ms. Ferguson, and Ms. McMillan set a clear Research Action Plan that focuses on the following prioritized goals:

1. K-12 Literacy Curriculum: K-12 Writing / K-12 Reading / Phonics (Secondary) [Complete]
2. Effective Practices for Grading [Complete]
3. Alternative CTE Program Models [Phase I Complete – Phase II Forthcoming]
4. District Framework for Program Evaluations
5. Evaluating Impact of District Initiatives and Targeted Programs
6. Ensuring Equitable Access to Curriculum [i.e., advanced courses]
7. School Climate Survey

The TPSD team prioritized digging deeper to identify innovative programs related to career and college readiness and CTE programs. The TPSD and Hanover teams met on April 25 to discuss

the Alternative CTE Program Models research, and the team has sent a follow up to request the following priorities for the next research work:

1. **Career Academy / Wall to Wall Models** – The Hanover team provided a research study entitled **High School Academies – Best Practices and Innovations** (please let Ms. McMillan know if you would like access to this information) that shared an overview of this information, but there is a need for more information about the future research areas related to (1) **innovative scheduling practices**, (2) **innovative work-based learning experiences and partnership models**, and (3) **middle school career exploration practices**. Additionally, we would like to make sure there is a specific focus on highlighting the targeted implementation work of exemplar school districts / schools TPSD may want to emulate.
 - a. **Targets** – Metro Nashville Public Schools in Tennessee, Gulfport High School in Mississippi, Boston Arts Academy in Massachusetts
 - b. **Structure** – The “Essential Components in Nashville” slides for the previously shared resource, especially related to the partnerships with employers, colleges, and community, is a really strong resource. It would be helpful to see this same format for other schools or districts.
2. **Apprenticeship Models** – In adding onto the innovative work-based learning experiences and partnership models, our team requested the Hanover team dig deeper into Apprenticeship examples like Colorado’s CareerWise highlighted in the previous research.

Ms. McMillan has a call scheduled with the Hanover team on Tuesday, June 11 to confirm the plans for this research study and timeline. She has requested the study be finalized by Thursday, July 11 based on having the first District of Innovation planning meeting on Tuesday, July 16.