

**Executive Summary – District of Innovation Work Streams**  
**Updated February 1, 2019**

**STEWART MCMILLAN**  
**INNOVATION PROGRAM FACILITATOR**

**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

**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

**Comprehensive Needs – DG 1-4**

The TPSD District of Innovation process of identifying the greatest needs for the Tupelo Public School District culminated in a presentation at the January 15, 2019 board meeting and subsequent January 22, 2019 community meeting. Additionally, the Your Story, Our Purpose, One Heartbeat video with the corresponding information will be released on February 1, 2019.

Stewart McMillan has been asked by Lewis Whitfield to present at the Education Committee Meeting on February 5, 2019. She will share an overview of the process that we took in order to get feedback from all key stakeholders – students, parents, faculty/staff, and community members – as a part of our District of Innovation process. Additionally, she will answer any questions about the process and how to potentially replicate.

### **Project Lead the Way – DG 3, 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 PLTW curriculum options are Launch (Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade), Gateway (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade), and High School in the three tracks. The PLTW Launch format is modules that take between 10-20 hours to complete. Once you get to the middle and high school, the PLTW curriculum spans from nine weeks to full year courses.

The TPSD team (Dr. Picou, Ms. Britton, Ms. Ferguson, Ms. McMillan, and the instructional coaches) learned about PLTW, observed classrooms in Grenada, reviewed the curriculum and cross referenced with the Mississippi college and career ready science standards, and created an implementation plan. The proposed implementation plan strives to make sure that PLTW can be implemented with fidelity in a manageable and financially sound manner. The suggestion is that one PLTW Launch module be implemented in all gifted classes in the four 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade schools in the fall of 2019. During the spring semester of 2020, the suggested implementation is to implement another PLTW Launch module in either the STEM lab or technology lab as a part of the specials rotation.

The TPSD team has worked to propose the implementation plan to the key stakeholders. Ms. Britton, Ms. Ferguson, and Ms. McMillan presented an overview of the proposed PLTW implementation for the 2019-2020 school year to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade principals on Monday, January 28, and Ms. McMillan presented to each of the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade instructional coaches and gifted teachers prior to Friday, February 1. Ms. McMillan will present to the TPSD board the proposal at the February 12 board meeting, and she is happy to answer any questions.

In terms of funding, there are five categories of consideration that are built into the plan – annual participation fee, teacher training, equipment and supplies, consumables, and technology. The TPSD team has currently received PLTW Toyota USA grant funding (\$10,000 per 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade school) and Toyota Wellspring Education Fund professional development funding (\$25,000) that can be utilized for this implementation. Additionally, Ms. McMillan is submitting the Toyota Wellspring Education Fund with the additional funding support needs so that none of the schools will have to budget for the PLTW initiative.

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

Project SEARCH is focused on preparing young people with significant disabilities for success in integrated, competitive employment. Logistically, the proposed TPSD Project SEARCH opportunity would involve 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 in a variety of departments at the hospital that would ideally turn into viable employment opportunities.

The Project SEARCH model in Tupelo would entail a partnership with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, North Mississippi Health Services, and the Tupelo Public School District. Representatives from each of these entities met on January 16 to discuss this

project with the end goal of deciding about the potential to partner and move forward. Sondra Davis, the Chief Human Resources Officer at NMHS, gave a verbal confirmation at this meeting and commitment to move forward.

In terms of next steps, the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services plans to provide a draft MOU and project plan based on the previous implementation of Project SEARCH in Rankin County with UMMC. Additionally, the planning team from the January 16 meeting will meet again on February 5 to review and discuss next steps. The board will be kept apprised of the Project SEARCH work as there are updates.

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

The Tupelo Public School District team is excited about the opportunity to create a middle college with the Itawamba Community College team. The planning team met on December 18 and January 15 to discuss this implementation. During the January 15 meeting, the planning team comprised of Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Mr. Laney, and Ms. McMillan [Principal Dobbs and Counselor Rogers were unavailable] discussed an implementation timeline as well as specific logistics. Some of the initial conversations that took place were on the entrance criteria, design and development of the course of study [Academic and CTE tracks, including a computer science route], course credit, calendars, facilities, staffing, transportation, and student meals.

The planning team plus additional staff members, including Ms. Murphree and Mr. Ellis, will meet again at the end of February to discuss the implementation logistics and resources that Ms. McMillan provided after the January 15 meeting. A codified MOU and project plan will be the next deliverables as a part of this process. The creation of a payment plan and budget for the middle college will be supported by Ms. Murphree, and the development of a communication plan and buy-in from all key stakeholders will be key considerations with the addition of Mr. Ellis.

### **MS Humanities Council Community Dialogues - DG 3, TPSD GN 1**

The Mississippi Humanities Council is facilitating conversations in four communities around the state targeting race-related opportunities for growth. In partnership with the Link Centre and the Tupelo Public School District, the first community conversation was determined by our team and is entitled “The Story of Us: Increasing Access to AP Classes.”

There will be four, three-hour discussions focusing on solutions Tupelo can explore in order to increase diversity in the Advanced Placement classes at the high school. There were 51 individuals who signed up to participate in these sessions, and there have been about 22 participants who have attended the first two sessions. The first session took place on Monday, January 14 with a focus on defining the problem. The second session took place on January 28, and this session worked to build historical context about issues in Mississippi as well as nationally. The next two sessions will transition to identifying potential solutions and creating a preamble and commitment for future action.

The TPSD team looks forward to taking the feedback, preamble, and commitment to action to offer support with addressing this problem. Additionally, there is a hope that the participants will become active community leaders in working to find a solution. Cheryl Dexter, a teacher at ECEC and participant in these sessions, will be utilizing this work as her capstone project for her current leadership training program. She plans to explicitly work on parent engagement. The board will be apprised in March of the findings from these community dialogues and next steps in alignment with the District of Innovation priorities and focus areas.

### **Hanover Research Process – Alignment contingent on project**

The Tupelo Public School District has partnered with the Hanover Research group to offer additional capacity related to sharing evidence based practices as well as exemplar schools and districts related to key research questions. Dr. Picou, Ms. Britton, Ms. Ferguson, and Ms. McMillan have had multiple meetings with the Hanover team to 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)
2. Effective Practices for Grading
3. District Framework for Program Evaluations
4. Evaluating Impact of District Initiatives and Targeted Programs
5. Ensuring Equitable Access to Curriculum [i.e., advanced courses]
6. School Climate Survey

The Hanover Research group completed the K-12 Literacy Curriculum project in the fall semester in conjunction with the work that Ms. Ferguson and her team are doing to review the existing TPSD curriculum. The next phase of the Hanover Research is focused on effective practices for grading. The Hanover Research team will submit their completed research to the TPSD team by February 8, and the TPSD and Hanover teams will have a follow up call near the end of February to discuss the findings and create a clear plan for the next phase of research.

### **TPSD Version of ANSEP - DG 3, TPSD GN 1**

Dr. Picou has shared information with the Tupelo Public School District team about the Alaska Native Science and Engineering (ANSEP) program. This program created a cohort of Alaska native students that were provided additional supports, staff, and enrichment with a targeted emphasis on math to help them be prepared to be engineers.

Based on the identified problem of the low number of African American students in Advanced Placement classes, Dr. Picou has requested that Dr. English at Tupelo Middle School and Mr. Moton at Milam serve on a planning team to consider creating a similar cohort structure prior to high school to increase the diversity in Advanced Placement and dual credit with the longer term potential to impact the middle college. Dr. Picou, Dr. English, Mr. Moton, and Ms. McMillan had an initial planning meeting on January 16, and they are working to schedule a follow up in February.