

Executive Summary – District of Innovation Work Streams
Updated July 22, 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, Ms. Britton, Mr. Cantrell, Dr. English, Ms. Ferguson, Dr. Thomas, and Ms. McMillan (the District of Innovation advisory group) are meeting on the strategic planning and development of the District of Innovation application and presentation. The Advisory team 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:

- **Completed Actions**
 - **June 20** – Strategic planning meeting for the 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** – Advisory group strategic planning meeting with Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Dr. English, Dr. Thomas, and Ms. McMillan [Ms. Britton and Ms. Ferguson at CHAMPS]
- **Upcoming Actions**
 - **July 22-26** – English and Thomas meet with Secondary principals re: District of Innovation feedback
 - **July 26** – Strategic planning meeting with Ms. Britton and Ms. Ferguson
 - **August 8-13** – Initial District of Innovation Plan Writing Time
 - **August 16** – Advisory meeting re: District of Innovation draft plan
 - **August 21-22** – District of Innovation draft presentation at both Principal cohort meetings
 - **August 23-August 30** – District of Innovation updates writing time
 - **August 31** – Letter of Intent submitted to MDE
 - **September 2** – TPSD board submission with draft application and presentation
 - **September 10** – District of Innovation plan initial presentation to the TPSD school board
 - **September 11-26** – Community presentation and feedback phase of District of Innovation process; Request and Collect Community Letters of Support; Update District of Innovation application
 - **September 27** – Advisory meeting re: District of Innovation finalized plan
 - **September 30** - TPSD board submission with final application and presentation
 - **October 2/3** - District of Innovation final presentation at both Principal cohort meetings
 - **October 8** –District of Innovation plan final presentation at the TPSD school board meeting for approval [Board approval required for submission]
 - **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 application considered at the Mississippi State Board of Education meeting
 - **March 2020** – Notification of District of Innovation status at the Mississippi State Board of Education meeting

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 official press conference and press release for this program have been confirmed for Monday, August 5 at 10:00 am the North Mississippi Medical Center. The specific location is in the main unit, first floor in the north education center, rooms 7 and 8. Dr. Picou, Mr. Spees, and Mr. Howard [MDRS] will all speak at the press conference followed by the department heads of each internship sites. Additionally, the participating students and their family members will be in attendance and will participate in interviews. We welcome your participation at this event.

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

The Tupelo Public School District team has created a middle college with Itawamba Community College, starting with an initial pilot in the 2019-2020 school year, and the official MOU for this partnership was finalized at the May 14th board meeting. Middle College students will graduate from high school with their high school diploma and an Associate's degree. Ms. McMillan is bringing before the board the Middle College handbook for official approval.

Middle College Student Recruitment Synthesis [12 potential students]

- **Interested and Eligible** – 7 students
- **Interested and Missing ACT Eligibility** – 4 students
- **July 17 Potential Addition** – 1 student

Middle College Meetings Since June 5 [Last Executive Summary Submission]

1. **June 6** – College and Career Readiness Training
 - a. Ms. McMillan and the THS Counselors attended the MDE training on the College and Career readiness requirements. The THS team is considering implementation plans related to teaching this class in one of the following ways: (1) one full year class, (2) one full year class broken between junior and senior year, or (3) one fourth of a year each year of high school.
2. **June 7** – Tyler Philly Meeting
 - a. Ms. McMillan met 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** – Middle College Community Meeting for Eligible Students
 - a. The Middle College team presented to a group of seven students and their families with the overview of the middle college. Each of these participating was contacted to set up an individual meeting to ask additional questions and discuss the course of study information.
4. **July 8-16** – Individual Eligibility and Interest Meetings
 - a. Mr. Philley and Ms. McMillan met with all potential Middle College students and parents to answer additional questions about the program and to give course of

study information. The Middle College students were required to give their confirmation of interest in the program by July 16.

5. **July 17** – Enrollment Meeting with ICC Team
 - a. Mr. Philley, Ms. McMillan, Dr. Sumerel, Dr. McCraw, and Ms. Miller met to discuss the eligible and interested Middle College students for the 2019-2020 school year as well as the next steps related to enrollment.

Middle College Upcoming Meetings

1. **July 25** – ICC Dual Credit and Middle College Meetings
 - a. The interested and eligible Middle College students will meet with Mr. Philley, Dr. McCraw, and Ms. Miller to discuss their course of study, officially confirm their course of study, sign the FERPA parent waiver, and register for their classes for the fall 2019 semester.
2. **July 30** – Middle College Press Conference
 - a. The official press conference and press release related to the Middle College partnership will take place immediately following the board meeting.
3. **July 30** – ICC Communications Meeting
 - a. The TPSD and ICC communication teams will meet after the press conference to discuss next steps related to media doing a follow up on the Middle College students about a month into the school year.
4. **August 6** – Residual ACT Date
 - a. There are three potential Middle College students that need to take the Residual ACT at the ICC Fulton campus in order to be eligible for the program. These students know of this requirement and are currently committed to take this step based on their significant interest.

Ms. McMillan will look forward to sharing at the August board meeting the Middle College students who are officially participating in the pilot cohort for the 2019-2020 school year.

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, and Ms. McMillan is bringing them back together for a planning session on Thursday, August 1. 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 when finalized.

There is still a significant amount of behind the scenes work to make sure this program can be implemented with fidelity. 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. Based on it now being July, ordering supplies and rostering students are 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] was a summer program designed for children who have not previously been to a structured educational environment leading up to kindergarten fully funded by the Toyota Wellspring Education Fund. This early childhood programming targeted students to bolster their academic knowledge and behavior expectations in advance of starting kindergarten. It took place from Monday, July 8 through Friday, July 19 at King Early Childhood Education Center.

The TPSD Discovery program met the needs of 30 students. In doubling the number of students that were supported last year, the program went from one classroom to two classrooms. Strategically, a staff person was added to offer support with a student in the program who has an IEP, and we plan to build this into the budget overview for future years. We now have a better idea of the amount of time needed to recruit, assess, and support each of these students.

The Toyota Wellspring Education Fund committee members were invited to observe the program on July 16, and the parents and family members of the participating students were invited to a parent engagement luncheon on July 18. The parent engagement session had twenty two students and seven children, which was an increase from the six parents that participated last year. Dr. Picou came to share the importance of the program, and Ms. Dexter and Ms. Lee presented to the family members about ways to support their students' learning in the kindergarten year. As an additional incentive, lunch was provided and each family received a CDF bag, United Way supplies / backpacks, and Early Childhood Coalition resources.

The 30 students completed a pre-assessment in advance of the two week session, and they received a post-assessment on the Friday, July 19 last day. Ms. Dexter and Ms. Lee will work to capture this data in a shareable manner. Additionally, the plan is to partner with the Kindergarten schools to determine the teachers who will have these students for the upcoming school year so that Ms. Dexter and Ms. Lee can work to get additional qualitative and quantitative data during the upcoming school year.

As a final step in the TPSD Discovery process, we are working on receiving feedback from all key stakeholders. The parents were given a survey that seventeen completed surveys were returned, and the TPSD communications team worked to film some of the parents to utilize in marketing material for the program in future years. The participating staff were also surveyed to get their feedback. Ms. Dexter and Ms. Lee plan to review all these resources and debrief to talk about ways to make the program better for the upcoming year.

I will look forward to sharing the student data, synthesis of the feedback, and recommended changes for the upcoming school year in the August Executive Summary to conclude the updates on these innovative programs until the work begins in spring 2020 for the 19-20 school year

Hanover Research Process – Alignment contingent on project

The TPSD team has partnered with Hanover Research group during the 2018-2019 school year 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]
4. CTE Implementation Practices – Career Academies, Wall to Wall Models, Apprenticeship Models [Phase II In Process]

CTE Implementation Practices--Career Academies, Wall to Wal Models, Apprenticeship Models [As provided verbatim by the Hanover Research team]

- **Summary of Project Background** - Tupelo Public School District (Tupelo PSD) is applying for a “District of Innovation” designation in the fall of 2019. In support of the application, district leaders have worked with Hanover to identify innovative program models that meet significant district needs, with a focus on Career and Technical Education (CTE). Additional information is needed to gather further details on specific models of interest to Tupelo PSD (Career Academies, Wall to Wall Models, Apprenticeship Models) including: implementation approaches, challenges and solutions to those challenges; and the efficacy of the models ultimately implemented.
- **Key Research Questions for CTE Models of Interest –**
 - How did the district approach the **development** of their CTE programs or models?
 - Did they work with local industry to plan or develop the program i.e. backward design?
 - Did they identify and follow other innovative CTE models or develop their own innovations?
 - How did the district approach **implementation** of the work-based program or model?
 - What challenges did they encounter? (e.g. with scheduling of work-based learning, integration with academics etc.)
 - How were those challenges addressed? Were those solutions effective?
 - How do districts assess the **efficacy** of the CTE program models they implement?
 - What measures of student outcomes do they track and find useful? Over what period of time?
- **Methodology Approach** - Hanover proposes an **in-depth interview study** to gather the specific details and insights that will help Tupelo PSD to anticipate and understand the approaches, challenges, and possible resolutions for implementing their own innovative CTE program or model. This methodology is best suited to uncover individual

experiences and to identify salient themes across them. Hanover will design, administer (via phone), and analyze the in-depth interviews. Interviews will be used to explore how districts with innovative or alternative CTE programs and models were developed and implemented. Tupelo PSD will use the results of this study to provide insight and information that will be helpful in designing and developing their own innovative approach to CTE in their district.

- **Sampling** - Because qualitative data is not quantifiable, establishing a pre-set number of interviews for the study does not improve data quality. The targeted number of interviews needed varies across studies and participant types (e.g. homogenous populations tend to share similar experiences and therefore require less interviews). **Hanover strives to interview enough participants to ensure we have comprehensively answered the research questions.** In order to target the most relevant cross-section of districts, interview participants will be selected based on their CTE approach and any identifiable innovative practices.

Ms. McMillan has a call scheduled with the Hanover team on Monday, July 22 to confirm the plans for this research study and timeline. The next phase of the research will be shared with the TPSD team by Monday, August 19.

The TPSD team made the decision to not continue the Hanover Research partnership for the 2019-2020 school year, so the updates on this workstream will discontinue after the September board meeting. If you are interested on accessing research studies on any particular topics, please feel free to contact Ms. McMillan in advance of September as she can search in the system for research articles above and beyond the targeted research that is being tailored to our TPSD specific needs.

Grant Management – Alignment contingent on project

Ms. McMillan oversees grant management for the Tupelo Public School District, and she has built out an overview of the grant funds that are supporting innovative initiatives for the district in order to keep the board apprised of this support stream. As a flag, she has not included the 42 AEE grants based on length, but please contact her if you have any questions about the AEE grant process or grants.

Toyota Grants

- **District of Innovation 1.0 [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – Ms. McMillan received **\$102,000** from TWEF related to STEM related support at the following schools:
 - **3rd-5th Grade Schools** – Project Lead the Way implementation support
 - **Tupelo Middle School** – Robotics equipment in the 7th grade Cyber Foundations class
 - **Tupelo Career and Technical Center** – Engineering and Construction class equipment
 - **Tupelo High School** – ActivPanel resources for the science classes
- **Early Childhood [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – The TPSD Discovery program was funded through the early childhood funds from TWEF. We received **\$20,000** for this program this year and had carry over of **\$4,850.15** from last year for a

total of **\$24,850.15** available. I will be able to provide the final amount spent and carry over after the staff and benefits are paid at the end of August.

- **Professional Development [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – TPSD received **\$25,000** for professional development and national conference funding. Ms. Britton utilized about **\$6,000** of this funding to cover the cost of two additional staff attending the CHAMPS training in Portland that were not built into the federal funds utilized to cover the other staff. Ms. McMillan utilized **\$9,500** for the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) teacher training, and she plans to use additional funds to train the current PLTW with the follow up training that will allow them to train other PLTW teachers in house. There is currently **\$9,998.36** available in this funding source.
- **WorkKeys [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – TPSD received **\$15,000** in January 2019 to cover the WorkKeys credential funding. This will be used by students participating in some of the TCTC programs, and there is currently still **\$14,118** available.
- **Planting Partnerships [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – The Growing Healthy Waves program received \$10,000 to be utilized across all the Pre-K through 8th grade schools to support this program. The current balance is **\$6,804.21**.
- **Outdoor STEM [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – The Growing Healthy Waves program received **\$10,000** for the Lawndale greenhouse and corresponding program. The current balance is **\$3,513.68** that will need to be expended prior to September 1.
- **Full STEAM Ahead [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – Ms. Britton wrote the Full STEAM Ahead! grant for implementation in the 2018-2019 school year. There were **\$45,000** in funds related to FOSS kits that were repurposed for the Project Lead the Way implementation prior to Ms. McMillan receiving the Toyota USA Foundation grant. Ms. McMillan needs to work with Dr. Luse to finalize the plans to utilize this funding.
- **Project Lead the Way [Toyota USA]** – Ms. McMillan received **\$40,000**, **\$10,000** per 3rd-5th grade school, to offer support with the initial implementation costs of Project Lead the Way.

Small Grants

- **Growing Healthy Waves [E.R. Carpenter Foundation]** - The Growing Healthy Waves program received **\$10,000** to be utilized across all the Pre-K through 8th grade schools to support this program, and this money has not yet been spent.
- **Growing Healthy Waves [Donations]** – The Growing Healthy Waves program has received donations from organizations like Rotary, Junior Auxiliary, etc. that supports this program. The current fund balance is **\$2,642.66**.
- **Lowe's Toolbox [Lowe's]** – Crystal Wilson at TMS received **\$4,975** to provide funding for her robotics class.
- **TVA/StemX [TVA]** – Crystal Wilson at TMS received **\$5,000** to provide funding for her robotics class.