

**Executive Summary – District of Innovation Work Streams**  
**Updated May 6, 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

**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 MDRS/NMHS/TPSD MOU was approved at the March 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting, and the MOU is still in the process of being signed by the MDRS and NMHS teams. In terms of major project updates, all nine of the students that submitted applications for the program were accepted, and the last steering committee meeting on April 30 was in conjunction with the parent and family night to share information about the program. All participating students and their family members were in attendance at this event. Susan Dudley, the Project SEARCH Teacher /

Transition Coordinator, shared logistical information about the program and requested that they sign some of the required documentation. Sondra Davis from NMHS spoke to the parents to welcome them to the hospital and reiterate their enthusiasm, and the MDRS team spoke about the services they can provide and showed the video of the existing site.

The next priorities for Project SEARCH are updating the students' IEPs before the school year ends, finalizing the open MDRS cases, and meeting all the hospital outlined requirements – background check, drug test, tb test, and immunizations. The planning team is working through these logistics while also planning the press release and kick off promotional event for this program on Monday, August 5. Please mark your calendar for 9:00-11:00 am on Monday, August 5, and Ms. McMillan will follow up with additional details in June.

### **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. 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 official dual credit / middle college MOU with Itawamba Community College, and the Middle College Counselor position hire from Mr. Dobbs.

### **Middle College Meetings Since April 9**

1. **April 12** – TPSD Middle College Meeting
  - a. This meeting involved our internal team [Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Mr. Ellis, Mr. Dobbs, Mr. McNeal, and Ms. McMillan], and the suggestion was made at this meeting to do a soft pilot with a targeted 5 students for the upcoming year.
2. **April 15** – Middle College Meeting with CDF
  - a. This meeting involved Dr. Picou, Mr. Ellis, and Ms. McMillan with Mr. Rumbarger, Mr. Homan, Mr. Milstead, and Ms. Black from CDF. The TSPD team shared an overview of the Middle College and requested feedback on hybrid funding models and potential funding sources. The CDF team committed to offering support with determining the best participants for the May 2 informational meeting and lunch.
3. **April 22** – Middle College Presentation Meeting
  - a. This meeting involved Dr. Allen, Dr. Sumerel, and Ms. McMillan. Ms. McMillan shared the board presentation from April 9 and requested feedback for any suggested changes in advance of the May 2 presentation.
4. **April 24** – Middle College Communications/Community Relations Meeting
  - a. This meeting involved the ICC and TPSD communication teams sharing information about the Middle College and creating priorities for moving the work forward. The ICC team will be prioritizing offering support in early May.
5. **May 2** – Middle College Informational Session and Lunch
  - a. This meeting involved TPSD [Picou, Cantrell, Ellis, English, Dobbs, Topp, and McMillan], ICC [Allen, Camp, Sumerel, Jones, Haab, Gillespie, and Strother – Emison unable to attend], CDF [Rumbarger, Homan, Milstead, and Black], CREATE [Clayborne and Luse – Whitfield unable to attend], and Elected

Officials [Mayor Shelton – Represented by Ruth Fondron as Mayor Shelton was out of town, City Council President Beard, Lee County Board of Supervisors President Roper, Senator McMahan, and Representative Aguirre]. Dr. Picou, Dr. Allen, and Ms. McMillan presented an overview of the middle college in alignment with the April 9 presentation to the board and expand upon the funding and next steps. The TPSD felt there was significant engagement and support for the middle college from this group.

6. **May 3** – MDE Check-in

- a. This meeting involved Dr. Bullard and Ms. McMillan. Ms. McMillan shared an update on the Middle College work and requested support related to policy work, schedule, and additional logistics. Additionally, Ms. McMillan received updates on the District of Innovation process including learning that there are 6-7 school districts that will be applying in the fall of 2019 for District of Innovation status. As a reminder, the State Board of Education is allowed to approve up to 5 schools for the District of Innovation status in a year, and there have never been this many schools that have applied at one time.

### **Middle College Upcoming Meetings**

7. **May 7** – Daily Journal Meeting

- a. Mr. Ellis and Ms. McMillan have a meeting with the Daily Journal team in advance of the May 14 board meeting to provide updates on the Middle College work. They have asked that no press be released until after the May 14 meeting.

8. **May 13** – ICC / TPSD Communications Planning Meeting

- a. The ICC Communications and Community Relations team will meet 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** – Review the information provided as a brainstorming resource in the draft flyer related to the name and potential catch phrase.
  - ii. **Flyer** – Review the draft flyer. Work to get feedback from Dr. Sumerel to confirm the content related to enrollment and the course of study.
  - iii. **Website** – Reserve space on the website with the understanding that this will be built out more in the future.
  - iv. **Communication Timeline** – Brainstorm a communication timeline to roll out with local media.

9. **May 14** – TPSD Board Meeting for MOU and Middle College Counselor hire

10. **May 21** – Collegiate Academy School Visit

- a. Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Dr. English, Mr. Dobbs, Mr. McNeal, and Ms. McMillan will visit 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.

Ms. McMillan will bring recommendations related to board policy updates to the IHL graduation requirements at the June 4 board meeting. She is working to get policy support from Dr. Bullard at MDE and reaching out to other middle college programs to review their policy work.

### **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 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 another PLTW Launch module in either the STEM lab or technology lab as a part of the specials rotation.

The next big step related to the Project Lead the Way implementation is training the gifted and specials teachers, which has been confirmed for Tuesday, May 28 and Wednesday, May 29, and you have the MOU for this meeting on your agenda for approval. We are extremely grateful for the Toyota Wellspring Education Fund professional development money to cover this expense, and the Toyota Blue springs plant is both hosting this training and providing snacks and lunch for all 21 staff that are involved. Please share your gratitude if you come in contact with any Toyota staff members in the upcoming weeks.

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. Ms. McMillan is working on registering the teachers on the PLTW platform and connecting with the Principals and Mr. Laney to confirm the classroom space in order to accommodate the needs of this program. Additionally, Ms. McMillan is creating a plan with the technology team to make sure all Chromebooks are updated with the appropriate apps for this implementation. In the future, ordering supplies and rostering students will be significant priorities starting in July.

### **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 will target 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 recruitment efforts started the week of April 29-May 3 with the billboards going up, the release of the registration forms, the support from social media, and the *Daily Journal* article on May 2.

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.

## **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 has 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, and our team is working to update the research request for the next phase of this work. An updated research action plan and next steps will be included in the executive summary in June.