

**Executive Summary – District of Innovation Work Streams**  
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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

**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 started by identifying the greatest needs for the Tupelo Public School District. The bulk of this work from the community feedback culminated in a presentation at the January 15<sup>th</sup> board meeting and subsequent January 22<sup>nd</sup> community meeting. This feedback will all be utilized as decisions are made related to allocating funds for the FY20 budgeting process.

Dr. Rob Picou and Stewart McMillan worked from October 23, 2018 through February 27, 2019 to have individual meetings at each of the 14 TPSD schools to understand the priorities for the year and the greatest needs. Additionally, they have worked to go to every staff meeting to be able to share out about the District of Innovation and request feedback from the school staff, with the last staff meeting being ECEC on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Shumpert and Ms. McMillan are working to compile the feedback from these meetings into a format for the FY20 budgeting process.

### **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. Stewart McMillan presented a PLTW Launch implementation plan for the 2019-2020 school year at the February 12, 2019 board meeting. 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. Dr. Picou worked the week of February 25 through March 1 to make sure that all the necessary PLTW terms of agreement and forms are signed and submitted so that we can move forward with this implementation.

The TPSD team has worked to propose the implementation plan to the key stakeholders, including the instructional coaches, principals, and gifted teachers. Ms. McMillan is now working to present to the full 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade teams so they are aware of this implementation. She has locked in to speak to Lawndale on Thursday, February 28, and she is working to lock in the meetings at Lawhon, Pierce, and Rankin. Additionally, she has a meeting planned with the TPSD Operations Directors on Wednesday, March 6 to make sure they have details on this implementation and can offer support with the areas they oversee (facilities, technology, etc.)

The next big steps related to the Project Lead the Way implementation involve training the gifted and specials teachers, which has tentatively been set for Tuesday, May 28 and Wednesday, May 29, and registering the teachers on the PLTW platform. In the future, ordering supplies and rostering students will be significant priorities.

### **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. 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, 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 planning team hosted parent engagement sessions on Tuesday, February 19 and Wednesday, February 20, and Susan Dudley, TPSD's Transition Coordinator, worked to set individual parent and family meetings for eligible families that could not attend these sessions. The goal is for there to be up to 12 students who are eligible to participate during the 2019-2020 school year. In terms of next steps, the TPSD Project SEARCH planning team is meeting on Wednesday, March 6 to make sure there are clear next steps, and they will provide an overview to the TPSD Operations Directors later that afternoon. The MDRS/NMHS/TPSD MOU will be presented to the board for approval at the March 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

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

The Tupelo Public School District team plans to create a middle college with Itawamba Community College starting with a pilot in the 2019-2020 school year. The planning team met in December, January, and February, and it has now expanded to include the following individuals on the TPSD team: Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Mr. Laney, Mr. Ellis, Ms. Murphree, Ms. McMillan, Mr. Dobbs, Ms. Rogers, and Ms. Topp.

The initial conversations have focused on the entrance criteria, design and development of the course of study [Academic and CTE tracks], calendars, facilities, staffing, transportation, and student meals. The ICC team has created an MOU that is an extension of the current dual credit MOU that will be presented at a future board meeting for review.

In terms of next steps, the planning team has scheduled a meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup> with the TPSD Operations team, including transportation, food service, technology, finance, and communication to make sure that all staff are updated on this implementation process and can offer support with his or her areas of expertise. 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 entitled “The Story of Us: Increasing Access to AP Classes” took place in January and February.

There were 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 about 22 participants who have attended these sessions, and the culminating session resulted in the creation of four groups creating preambles with their personal commitments to action related to this identified problem.

**Group 1** – We the people of Tupelo, MS, in order to increase educational equity for all, regardless of race/creed/culture, will reach out to churches, community events, and families to increase knowledge of educational opportunities and services that are available in our area. We want to go to church / community events to set up tables, hand out flyers, and increase knowledge of opportunities.

**Group 2** – We the people of *The Story of Us* discussion group in order to increase minority representation in AP classes will actively recruit help from community members to educate parents, students, and community stakeholders on the benefits of AP classes by: creating informative videos to post on social media and district website and hold education fairs at churches and community centers with diverse populations.

**Group 3** – We the individuals who are committed to student success, in order to ensure equity in AP courses in Tupelo Public Schools, do establish the following:

- (1) Educational equity boot camps at area churches
- (2) Volunteer training for churches to help parents learn about equity and opportunities in AP
- (3) Pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> grade – Various ways to help students succeed to put them on a path to AP classes
- (4) 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade – Discuss AP classes and their benefits early and often

**Group 4** – We the people who are interested in targeting students to ensure educational equity in AP classes, make the following commitments to target the peers and/or the most influential person for students based on their age:

- (1) **Pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade** – Leverage **parents** to encourage their students. Specifically, create a book for each student that allows them to set goals related to their future career and taking advanced classes.
- (2) **3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade** – Leverage **teachers** to discuss the importance of AP classes, the language of AP classes, and the need to address ability grouping. Specifically, help them to write a blueprint with goal setting for their dream role. Offer opportunities to research careers and focus on their futures.
- (3) **6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade** – Leverage peers to discuss AP classes. Create structured small groups where current AP students from diverse backgrounds can share their AP experience and their WHY. We could pick 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders and bring them depending on their age (i.e. 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)
- (4) **10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade** – Leverage peers to discuss AP classes. Bring college students to share about their experience, specifically students who have been historically underserved. (ex. Jalicia – Nursing).

The MS Humanities Council team will have a debrief about these sessions on Wednesday, March 6 and the key takeaways from the facilitator perspective.

The participants have requested an additional meeting to work on codifying the preamble plans, so we are working to identify dates in late March for this purpose. 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. We will look forward to keeping the board apprised as there are additional updates.

### **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 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) [Complete]
2. Effective Practices for Grading [Complete]
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 team submitted their research on effective practices for grading to the TPSD team on February 8, and the TPSD and Hanover teams had a follow up call on February 28 to discuss the findings and create a clear plan for the next phase of research. The TPSD team would like to adjust the outlined research action plan to deprioritize the program evaluation framework and to add a new focus on conducting a scan of current districts to identify innovative programs related to career and college readiness and CTE programs with an emphasis on careers. The Hanover team requested time to create a proposal and a revised research action plan, and they will provide this information to the TPSD team by Friday, March 8 prior to spring break.

An updated research action plan and next steps will be included in the executive summary at the April 9<sup>th</sup> board meeting.