

**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. Dr. Rob Picou and Stewart McMillan had individual meetings at each of the 14 TPSD schools to understand the Principal's thoughts on the priorities for the year and the greatest needs, and they went to every staff meeting to share out about the District of Innovation and request feedback from the school staff. Ms. Shumpert and Ms. McMillan compiled the feedback from these meetings into an excel template to be able to look for trends across the grade bands and schools. This feedback will all be utilized as decisions are made related to allocating funds 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. 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.

Ms. McMillan has worked to propose the implementation plan to the key stakeholders, including the instructional coaches, principals, and gifted teachers, and she has had individual meetings with the communication, facilities/maintenance, finance, food service, human resources, technology, and transportation teams. 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, and she is working to meet individually with the specials teachers that will offer support.

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 MDRS/NMHS/TPSD MOU was approved at the March 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting, and the planning team is working to make sure that the project plan is continuing to move forward. The steering committee has a meeting on April 1, and a representative from the MDRS/NMHS/TPSD teams will travel to Jackson, MS for the Project SEARCH state wide training on April 3 and 4. The student interviews for the 9 students that applied to participate in the program will take place on April 9, and announcement letters will be sent out to all families after this date.

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

The Tupelo Public School District team is creating a middle college with Itawamba Community College, potentially starting with a pilot in the 2019-2020 school year. The planning team, including Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Mr. Laney, Mr. Ellis, Ms. Murphree, Ms. McMillan, Mr. Dobbs, Ms. Rogers, Ms. Topp, and Dr. English, is working through all the operational

department logistics to bring this workstream to fruition. Specifically, the communications, finance, food service, technology, transportation, facilities/maintenance and human resources teams have all been apprised of the middle college work and are offering diligent support.

Ms. McMillan will present an update on the eligibility requirements, alignment with graduation requirements, and development of the course of study [Academic and CTE tracks] as well as the internal TPSD operations support. She will be available to answer questions during the presentation.

In terms of next steps, the TPSD team is now prioritizing marketing the program, identifying funding, and seeing the middle college in action. Specifically, the team plans to meet with CREATE to provide a similar middle college presentation, develop resource materials in partnership with the TPSD and ICC communications teams, and lock in a visit to the Collegiate Academy middle college in Gulfport, MS. Finally, the ICC team has created an MOU that is an extension of the current dual credit MOU that will be presented for approval at the May 14 board meeting.

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

The Mississippi Humanities Council facilitated conversations, in partnership with the Link Centre and the Tupelo Public School District, 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 to increase diversity in the Advanced Placement classes at the high school. There were about 22 participants, 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. Jاليا – Nursing).

The participants requested an additional meeting to work on codifying the preamble plans that has been set for April 15. The TPSD team looks forward to taking the feedback, preamble, and commitment to action to offer support with addressing this problem. Ms. McMillan looks 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 to share evidence based practices related to key research questions. Dr. Picou, Ms. Britton, Ms. Ferguson, and Ms. McMillan helped 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 TPSD team plans 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 created a proposal for this new research item that they provided on March 8, and the next official check-in with the Hanover team has been locked in for April 25. An updated research action plan and next steps will be included in the executive summary at the May 14<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

### **TPSD Discovery**

The TPSD Discovery program [previously called Blast Off to Big School in the 2018 summer] 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, and the TPSD team received confirmation the last week of March that this funding was secured for the summer 2019.

This early childhood programming will target 25 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 two classified teachers. The teachers will utilize the lesson plans and support that was offered last year and build off this work to better meet the needs of the new group of students this year. The recruitment efforts for these students will start in April this year rather than late May and June like the 2018 summer.

### **WIOA Gateway RFP**

The Tupelo Public School District (TPSD) team plans to apply for the Request for Proposals for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity ACT (WIOA) Gateway Programs serving eligible in-school students for the 2019-2020 school year. TPSD is currently participating in the Gateway program through Three Rivers Planning & Development District with 8 students falling under this umbrella for the 2018-2019 school year.

The Gateway Program's goal is to teach eligible youth essential job skills while providing career awareness, career counseling, and career pipelines. Career awareness will be provided about the Mississippi Partnership Sector Strategy target industries which include: (1) Advanced Manufacturing, (2) Healthcare, (3) Information Technology, and (4) Logistics – warehousing, transportation, and distribution. Gateway participants will be encouraged to pursue careers in one of these target industry sectors through the development of a personalized Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that helps create short and long term career goals. Each Gateway participant will be required to attend essential job skills training and paid work experience/internship that will be identified with the support of Gateway staff, specifically the TPSD Career Coaches.

The students who participate in the Gateway program must be high school juniors or seniors interested in Career Tech fields in one of the target sectors. Additionally, they must be low-income as defined by WIOQ law and have one or more barriers including basic skills deficient, English Learner, Offender, Homeless or Runaway, Foster Child, Pregnant or Parenting, and/or Youth with a Disability.

The planning team for the WIOA Gateway Program is comprised of Art Dobbs, Evet Topp, Kristy Luse, Erica Golden, Missy Lunceford, and Stewart McMillan. This team will meet on Wednesday, April 3 to discuss the drafted WIOA Gateway Program application in advance of finalizing to submit by the April 15 deadline. Ms. McMillan will provide updates to the board on this workstream at future board meetings.