

Organization Name: Johns Hopkins University/ Talent Development Secondary

Partner Background and Mission

The mission of Talent Development Secondary is to provide evidence-based models, tools and services to the most challenged secondary schools serving the most vulnerable students in the country. Talent Development Secondary envisions a nation in which our most vulnerable students have access to an education that develops their unique strengths and talents, builds their academic and socio-emotional competencies, engages them in relevant and exciting learning opportunities, supports them so they can succeed, and prepares them for post-secondary education and the 21st century world of work.

TDS' more than twenty years of experience in transforming schools in high-poverty communities are thoroughly aligned to Louisiana's plan to improve struggling schools, and has enabled it to develop a model that can be customized and adapted to meet the needs of specific schools and districts. TDS has served in Louisiana schools since 2002. It began working with two New Orleans high schools and by 2004-2005 was providing services to thirteen schools. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, TDS worked with schools in the Recovery District and brought the Diplomas Now partnership (with City Year and Communities In Schools) to four high schools in 2007 through 2011. More recently, TDS has worked extensively in East Baton Rouge. It completed implementation in Broadmoor and Capitol middle schools in June 2016, and commenced work in East Feliciana Parish, supporting professional development for teachers and implementation of Early Warning Indicator systems at both the middle and high school.

Evidence of Track Record of Student and School Outcomes

TDS schools report significant increases in student achievement: standardized test scores, grade promotion and graduation rates, and college matriculation. Many TDS and Diplomas Now (a TDS partnership) schools around the nation have been *removed from state priority lists* of poorly performing schools, including Capitol MS in East Baton Rouge; Eastside Memorial HS in Austin, TX; Jeremiah Burke and The English High Schools in Boston; Noble Elementary-Middle in Detroit; and John Ericsson (MS 126) Middle School in New York City. TDS/DN implementation has consistently improved attendance and helped mitigate the behavioral challenges that tend to disrupt learning. Full TDS/DN implementation over four years has generated 15- to 20-point improvements in the graduation rates of schools such as Daniel Webster HS in Tulsa, Homestead HS in Miami, and Eastside Memorial in Austin.

- At Capitol MS in East Baton Rouge, the number of students at or above grade level in math and ELA rose from about 38% in 2013 to 45% in 2015, and the number achieving mastery more than doubled, from <5% to 10%. The percentage of students who went on to earn at least 6 credits in their freshman year of high school also rose to 67%, and more than half of academically struggling students exceeded expectations (57% in ELA and 61% in math). Many student support and school climate initiatives were institutionalized over the past five years, including Early Warning Indicator meetings, report card conferences, teacher teaming, and Restorative Practices.
- With TDS' help, Boston's Burke HS became the first high school to exit turnaround in Massachusetts. Average daily attendance (ADA) rose from 86.7% in 2010 to 91.4% in 2013; ELA proficiency increased from 29% to 72%, and math proficiency from 28% to 42%.
- The English High School, also in Boston, saw a 94% total graduation rate for 2015, a 44% increase since TDS began there and a 24% increase over 2013-14. Post-secondary readiness improved dramatically: 86% of graduates went on to four-year colleges, 11% to two-year colleges, 1% into training programs, with just 2% undecided or going directly to the workforce.

- Austin’s Eastside Memorial HS met Texas accountability standards after two years working with TDS. Between 2013 and 2015, the graduation rate increased from 76% to 96%. Eastside received the TEA 2015 Distinction Designation, and tied for first place in progress among Texas high schools.
- Denny International, a TDS middle school in Seattle, received the Washington State Achievement Award for math progress (students proficient or above rose from 31.8% in 2009 to 81.8% in 2014) and a Pathway to Excellence award for closing achievement gaps between Latino and white students, and between low income and non-low income students, by about 12% each.
- TDS’ Cardozo Education Campus was one of just three schools—and the only low-income school—in Washington DC to improve its graduation rate by more than 10 percentage points.
- Woodrow Wilson and Grover Washington Jr., TDS middle schools, were among the ten top middle schools in School District of Philadelphia improvement reports for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Organizational Model

- a. TDS is a whole-school reform provider, helping school leaders develop structures, implement instructional reforms, and provide supports needed to significantly improve student achievement and school climate. It can also provide stand-alone components of its model customized to address assessed needs. The full TDS Model is built on four Pillars of Transformation.

Pillar I is Teacher Teams and Small Learning Communities: helping school leaders reorganize for shared responsibility and professional collaboration. TDS works in partnership to help administrators and teachers plan scheduling, staffing, curricula, professional development, and data collection to identify students’ needs and support engaging and reflective instruction, based on a School Transformation Plan. Schools organize into small learning communities or 9th grade and career academies, where interdisciplinary teams of four teachers (e.g. math, ELA, social studies, and science) share about 120 students. An onsite TDS School Transformation Facilitator (STF) helps create a schedule using extended learning periods or, in high schools, a 4x4 block; teacher teams meet weekly to plan, collaborate, and address student data on academic, attendance, and behavior indicators (also called early warning indicators or EWIs). TDS offers training on teaming, implementing the EWI system, using data, etc.

Pillar II is Instruction and Curriculum, accompanied by coaching to ensure *quality instruction in core academic areas*. TDS math, ELA, and life/study skills curricula use components based on learning science evidence to build basic and cognitive skills. TDS math, ELA, and School and Student Support Services (S4) facilitators provide year-round professional development in a tiered coaching structure, supporting onsite ELA and math instructional coaches and peer-to-peer and team support to help teachers improve instruction for interactive learning. TDS also offers intensive math and literacy support labs for students with the greatest skills gaps. TDS high schools’ first semester acceleration courses prepare students for district credit-bearing math and ELA courses in semester two. Life/ study skills courses help students navigate adolescence and develop success skills that include study skills, goal-setting, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, time management, and college/career exploration.

Pillar III is Tiered Student Supports, a data-guided system using EWIs on attendance, behavior, and course performance to provide targeted and intensive supports when students begin to stray, at whole-school, group, and individual levels. Using a software platform that records student data, the STF helps teams conduct regular EWI meetings to identify students needing support, plan appropriate interventions, and evaluate those in place. The system also helps staff measure implementation fidelity, identify barriers, and adjust interventions for best results. Whole-school interventions support all students; targeted small group interventions include tutoring, extra-help labs, or support groups; intensive supports might be counseling, specialized tutoring, or social services interventions.

Pillar IV is a **Can-Do Climate for Students and Staff**: a culture that provides social-emotional supports to foster school success and college and career readiness. It builds on students' interests, develops their strengths, and ignites their passions, while offering staff the resources and encouragement needed to keep on supporting students. TDS programs help schools celebrate success and foster a growth mindset for students and staff: consistent classroom policies; positive behavior interventions; family and community activities; college visits and career days; report card conferences; restorative practices; and end-of-quarter celebrations. Teacher teams' supportive relationships with students help them address root issues underlying disengagement. Study/ life skills courses offer students tools and insight in time management, conflict resolution, handling peer pressure, setting goals, and career awareness.

While these Four Pillars are essential components to successful whole-school turnaround, TDS also **differentiates services on a contractual basis** when needs assessment identifies specific areas to be targeted (e.g., EWI supports, instructional strategies, curriculum, and/or teacher teaming alone).

- b. For TDS, the **ideal district or region** is one where 4-6 high-needs middle and/or high schools commit to implement the TDS model with high fidelity (for example, and most ideally, within a feeder pattern). Alternatively, a district where **one** middle school and/or **one** high school commits to full implementation, and 6-10 schools contract with TDS for specific components, is another viable configuration. Either of these configurations enables TDS to field a local team including an executive director, an STF in each full implementation school, and instructional facilitators for math, ELA, and School and Student Supports, who rotate to schools on a weekly basis to build team and instructional capacity.
- c. TDS has extensive experience working with other **third party providers** in over 50 schools in its Diplomas Now partnership with City Year and Communities In Schools. Depending on the organizations in place locally, it has also worked successfully with various other partners to provide extra student supports, such as College Summit and Success Highways, or with advocates such as Stand For Children.
- d. The following **supports from state, district, and school partners** have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of TDS school improvement services.
 - (1) School leaders who have chosen TDS based on philosophical alignment with our model, and who eagerly embrace the opportunity to co-develop a school improvement plan in partnership with TDS.
 - (2) A planning semester where possible, and up to four years of full implementation for greatest impact.
 - (2) District structures that offer principals autonomy and flexibility to make high impact decisions and respond to tactical challenges, with the accountability of clear expectations and regular district check-ins.
 - (3) A schedule that includes extended learning periods (75-90 minutes) for core courses and dedicated times for team EWI meetings, with a structure that caps the number of students each team must review.
 - (4) District math and ELA coaches in each school; freedom to use TDS math and ELA acceleration curricula in 9th and 10th grade first semester, filling skill gaps so students succeed in standard courses in semester 2.
 - (5) Access to school and district data systems in order to build and maintain the EWI System. The STF compiles and updates EWI information in real time, and must be granted access rights to school-level data from the partner schools and district.