

After 20 years in school improvement, TDS has learned that successful school reform requires school and district stakeholders to be able to maintain new practices without relying on external partners. TDS works with schools to develop a sustainability plan that builds local capacity to maintain TDS structures and strategies after formal implementation is over.

TDS first works with school and district stakeholders to conduct a needs assessment, analyzing student data, district and school capacity to implement the TDS model, and the context for implementation. This background helps to set student outcome goals and benchmarks, customize a transformation plan, and develop a timeline with action steps to monitor implementation and achievement of goals and benchmarks. As the school meets goals and internalizes components of the TDS model, it develops capacity to sustain the model beyond the initial 3-4 year grant period.

Securing commitment to the TDS model from all stakeholders is crucial to sustainability. TDS conducts awareness sessions with many stakeholder groups: school boards, district and school leaders, staff, collective bargaining units, students, parents, business and community members, and other organizations in the school. Once understanding and a sense of local ownership are established, TDS works to develop distributed leadership in the school: leadership and academy teams engaging in strategic planning and ongoing decision-making to drive implementation of the TDS model. TDS provides significant professional development and facilitation to identify resources, protocols, and strategies that build the capacity of the distributed leadership system, so that leadership and academy teams are equipped to carry out this work.

TDS schools use peer-driven, job-embedded professional development for cost-neutral sustainability. Schools select on-site math and literacy instructional coaches who work with TDS instructional facilitators to develop expertise in the model so they can provide ongoing job-embedded professional development. An onsite School Transformation Facilitator (STF) and a regional School and Student Support Services (S4) facilitator help school develop Early Warning Indicator (EWI) systems and facilitate team meetings to examine EWI data and identify and evaluate interventions. School leadership and staff thus learn to conduct activities to maintain TDS structures and instruction without external assistance. TDS job-embedded professional development, bi-annual conferences for principals and coaches, and a national network of coaches and facilitators sharing best practices help build this capacity to implement the model.

The TDS Field Manager (FM) also fosters sustainability through regular communication with district leadership, including formal quarterly reports on student outcomes, implementation, and next steps. The FM works to ensure that the TDS model is embedded in the district's strategic plan, and helps the district analyze resources to ensure that the district can fund the TDS schools' staffing model after the School Improvement Grant comes to an end. The FM communicates regularly with the school board and other stakeholders regarding implementation, student outcomes, and development of local support resources after the conclusion of the grant.

Schools that have implemented the TDS model are invited to remain engaged in the TDS network. Data collection and analysis and professional development for principals, coaches, and program coordinators are available for an annual fee. "Emeritus" schools also communicate with other TDS schools across the country about their respective successes and challenges. They may host visits from other schools interested in school reform and the TDS model. Maintaining communication helps reinforce implementation and ongoing commitment to the TDS model.

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