

This entity has identified exceptions to the Illinois State Board of Education's contractual terms and provisions.

Please refer to page 88 of the proposal or page 89 of this PDF for the exceptions.

## Part I – Narrative Description

### **Bidder:**

Johns Hopkins University  
Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts & Sciences  
Business and Research Projects Administration  
Mergenthaler Hall, Suite 225  
3400 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218-2685  
Phone: (410) 516-6126  
FAX: (410) 516-5063  
Email: [jfw@jhu.edu](mailto:jfw@jhu.edu) (Joan Warfield)

### **Department:**

#### **Diplomas Now—Johns Hopkins University**

3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218  
Phone: 410-516-8800  
Fax: 410-516-8890  
Contact email: [rbalfanz@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:rbalfanz@csos.jhu.edu) (Dr. Robert Balfanz)

**FEIN: 520595110**

**FEINs of Proposed Subcontractors**

**City Year:** 22-2882549

**Communities In Schools** - 36-3591326

#### **Application for consideration as a Lead Partner**

Diplomas Now has the capacity to serve schools in the following RESPRO Regions: I-A Chicago.  
Diplomas Now Talent serves grades 6-12.

#### **Parent Organization Information**

##### **Johns Hopkins University**

3400 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Chief Executive Officer/ Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts & Sciences: Gregory Ball F. Ball, Dean for Research and Graduate Education

Website address: <http://www.jhu.edu/> Email: [kra@resource.ca.jhu.edu](mailto:kra@resource.ca.jhu.edu)

Length of time JHU has been in business: 133 years

Annual Sales for past fiscal year: See attached audit statement.

Number of full time employees: 16,227

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## Types and descriptions of business:

After more than 130 years, Johns Hopkins remains a world leader in both teaching and research. Eminent professors mentor top students in the arts and music, the humanities, the social and natural sciences, engineering, international studies, education, business and the health professions. Those same faculty members, and their research colleagues at the university's Applied Physics Laboratory, have each year since 1979 won Johns Hopkins more federal research and development funding than any other university.

The university has nine academic divisions and campuses throughout the Baltimore-Washington area. The Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, the Whiting School of Engineering, the School of Education and the Carey Business School are based at the Homewood campus in northern Baltimore. The schools of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing share a campus in east Baltimore with The Johns Hopkins Hospital. The Peabody Institute, a leading professional school of music, is located on Mount Vernon Place in downtown Baltimore. The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies is located in Washington's Dupont Circle area.

The Applied Physics Laboratory is a division of the university co-equal to the nine schools, but with a non-academic, research-based mission. APL, located between Baltimore and Washington, supports national security and also pursues space science, exploration of the Solar System and other civilian research and development.

Johns Hopkins also has a campus near Rockville in Montgomery County, Md., and has academic facilities in Nanjing, China, and in Bologna, Italy. It maintains a network of continuing education facilities throughout the Baltimore-Washington region, including centers in downtown Baltimore, in downtown Washington and in Columbia.

Parent Organization FEIN: 520595110

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Gregory F. Ball (authorized signature)  
Dean of Research

## 2. Executive Summary

Diplomas Now is applying to be considered as a Lead Partner for Illinois' Partnership Zone. If selected, Diplomas Now hopes to serve up to 3 secondary schools (6-8 or 9-12) in RESPRO area I-A (Chicago).

Diplomas Now is an innovative school turnaround model designed to work in partnership with the nation's most challenged middle/K-8 and high schools to help students stay on track or get back on track, graduate and succeed in post-secondary education. Diplomas Now pairs evidence-based comprehensive school improvement with national service teams to provide tutoring, mentoring, monitoring and engagement activities at the required scale, along with integrated student support services for the highest need students. The Diplomas Now model unites three organizations – Talent Development, City Year and Communities In Schools – each one with a proven track record in improving student achievement - to create a successful new school model.

Each organization has been able to demonstrate through rigorous third party evaluations that its efforts lead to significant improvements in critical student outcomes including attendance, behavior, on-time grade promotion and achievement. Diplomas Now seeks to partner with the Illinois State Board of Education Public Schools (ISBE) in providing school improvement assistance and support to reduce achievement gaps and improve achievement among all students in Illinois' high priority schools. By combining efforts, Diplomas Now and ISBE will provide hundreds of secondary students that are most likely to drop out with a powerful range and intensity of supports required to keep them in school and on-track to graduation.

Specifically, the Diplomas Now model integrates the following four key elements:

- 1) Effective whole school reform with research and evidence-based instructional, organizational and student, teacher and administrative support components
- 2) A teacher-friendly early warning data system tied to research-based prevention, intervention and recovery strategies that get the right intervention to the right student at the right time
- 3) A second team of adults tightly integrated into the design that works closely with teachers and administrators to provide targeted and intensive supports at the needed intensity and scale
- 4) A team-based organizational structure and collaborative work environment to make the job manageable

According to comprehensive studies in multiple urban high poverty school districts, there are three key "off-track" indicators of student performance that predict student success in school: **Attendance**, **Behavior** and **Course failure in math or English**. Students in high poverty environments whose performance demonstrates being off-track in even one of these indicators between the 6-9<sup>th</sup> grade typically have not more than a 25% chance of graduating from high school. Collectively, about 80% of eventual dropouts fall "off-track" in one or more of these indicators between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In the high schools which produce most of the nation's dropouts and the middle/K-8 grade schools which feed them, it is common for hundreds of students to be off-track in one or more indicators. Reducing the number of students exhibiting "off-track" performance in these indicators would mean more

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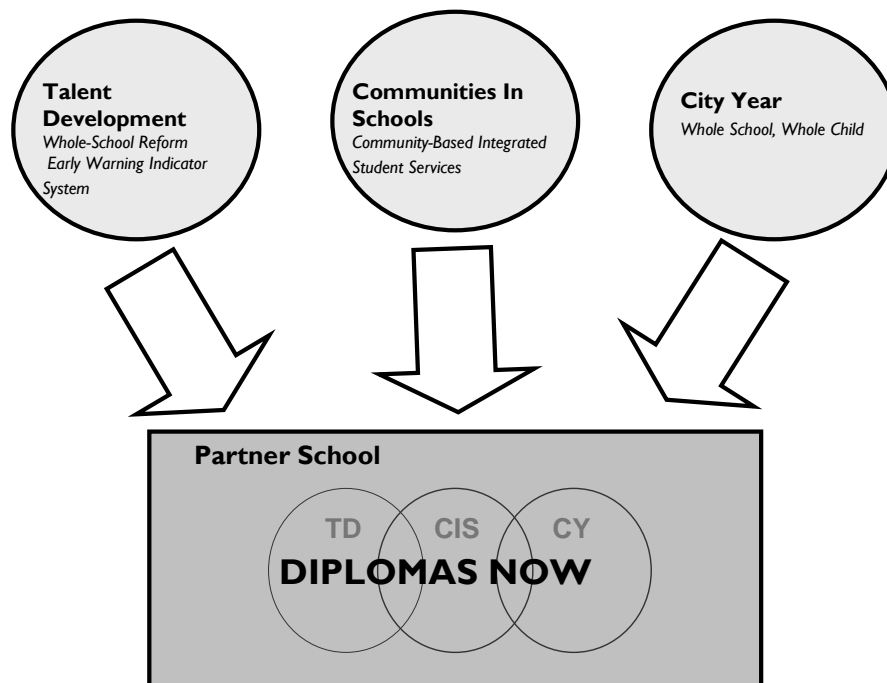
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children attending school, succeeding academically and, therefore, becoming far less likely to fail or drop out.

A key element of the Diplomas Now model is an emphasis on the rigorous collection of data related to individual student progress. Through a process of regularly monitoring student performance related to the key indicators of attendance, behavior and course performance, students are provided differentiated types and levels of support as well as ongoing assessment based on need.

The ultimate goal of Diplomas Now is to dramatically increase the graduation and college/career readiness rates among students served, and in so doing, demonstrate that the middle and high schools which currently drive the nation's graduation rate crisis can be transformed. For each year Diplomas Now is running in a school, there will be a significant decrease in the number of students with low attendance, poor behavior, limited effort, course failure and grade retention, as well as an increase in the number of students with strong attendance, high engagement, good course grades, improved achievement, and earned on-time grade promotion.

## Brief Overview of the Diplomas Now School Turnaround Model



## ***Talent Development***

Talent Development will provide an integrated set of instructional, teacher and administrator support, professional development, and organizational strategies which have proven effective in raising achievement, promotion, and graduation rates in the nation's most challenged high poverty middle and secondary schools. These reforms include creating a more personalized learning environment for students and teachers by enabling teams of teachers to work with a common set of 75-90 students for one or more years, implementing challenging and coherent research-based school-wide instructional programs in the core subjects, providing extensive professional development supports for teachers and administrators, and coordinated extra help courses for students.

## ***City Year***

City Year will place a team of highly trained corps members (young adults up to 24 years of age) in each school four days a week, from before school opens each day through the end of after school programs, for the entire year. City Year corps members are assigned to a homeroom of students and interact with that class throughout the school day and in afterschool programs. Within the homeroom, corps members are assigned a "focus list" of students, selected because they are exhibiting one or more early warning indicators.

While the primary focus of the City Year team will be literacy, math, attendance and behavior interventions with students on the focus list, the team also provides a variety of "whole-school" preventive interventions. These are to be determined via partnership discussions but will likely include things such as support of school-wide positive behavior incentives, school climate improvements, parent/community engagement, and student community service/service learning projects.

## ***Communities In Schools***

Communities In Schools will provide an experienced site coordinator for each school, supported by both its local affiliate and the national organization. Putting into practice the community-based integrated student supports (CBISS) model, the site coordinator will work to assess the range, scale, and scope of the specialized intensive supports needed by students exhibiting the highest degree of off-track indicators. Following the needs assessment, CIS will bring in and monitor the organizations and individuals required to provide the identified supports.

## **3. Service Area and Capacity Limitations**

Diplomas Now has the capacity to serve schools in RESPRO Area 1-A. Diplomas Now has the capacity to serve up to three schools (6-8 or 9-12) identified in the initial cohort of partnership schools, and projects having the capacity to serve up to three schools in future cohorts of partnership schools beginning in FY11 and beyond. We will engage with the district to prioritize the schools with whom to partner.

## 4. Work Plan

### 1. Needs Assessment

Diplomas Now engages in a comprehensive, multi-part needs assessment at both the school and district level before entering into a partnership. This needs assessment follows this timeline:

*1. Initial analysis of school need:* At this stage of the needs assessment, Diplomas Now analyzes student outcome data at the school level, examining attendance, course passing rates, dropout information, assessment scores, behavior data such as school suspensions, and any other available indicators that provide evidence of the school's current status.

*2. Initial awareness discussion with district and school leadership:* During this second stage of the needs assessment, members of the Diplomas Now management team meet with district and school leadership to:

- provide awareness of the core elements of the Diplomas Now model
- review the analysis of district and school data
- evaluate the alignment between the core elements of the Diplomas Now program and the improvement priorities of the district and school
- assess the costs associated with the implementation of the Diplomas Now model
- create an initial timeline for both planning and implementation of the Diplomas Now model at the school site(s)

After these discussions, Diplomas Now and school and district leadership make a joint determination regarding the strength of the potential partnership, and make a collective decision whether to move forward with further needs assessment and awareness activities

*3. Awareness activities with school staff:* This stage of the needs assessment process involves working with school staff members so that staff can better understand the Diplomas Now model. Diplomas Now facilitators host events where staff members learn about the Diplomas Now organizational structure and curriculum. Staff members can also use these events to ask questions concerning implementation, work with Diplomas Now staff to analyze the alignment of existing school programs and curricula with the Diplomas Now model, and share information regarding both quantitative data and important qualitative contextual information that could impact implementation of the model. These events also provide school leadership with the opportunity to survey school staff to gauge their support for moving forward with implementation of the model.

*4. Refinement of budget, planning timeline, and implementation plan:* This stage of the needs assessment process parallels the awareness activities for school staff. Members of the Diplomas Now management team work with school and district staff to:

- develop a timeline of activities to plan for implementation of the Diplomas Now model
- create a plan for implementation of the model's components
- develop benchmarks and metrics for measuring the impact of the Diplomas Now model on student outcomes

- Formulate a budget that provides the appropriate resources to successfully implement the Diplomas Now model.

This planning and budgeting process provides the opportunity for Diplomas Now and school and district stakeholders to determine specific staffing needs, facilities requirements, and program costs necessary for successful implementation, and also to provide evidence of adequate resources to meet these costs.

*5. Awareness for families and community members:* Before making a final decision regarding a potential partnership, Diplomas Now schedules time to meet with families and other members of the school and district community. At these event(s), Diplomas Now outlines the components of the model, explains how these components benefit students and their families, discusses opportunities for both families and the community to become involved with the school's implementation efforts, and answer questions and concerns regarding the implementation of the Diplomas Now model.

## **2. Community Involvement and Engagement**

School-family-community partnerships are essential because each component is a powerful sphere of influence on a student's development that can potentially pull together in a mutually positive direction. In addition, the college and career emphasis of the Diplomas Now model needs to draw on family and community resources to play a major role in these areas. Families need to work together with schools throughout the college awareness, selection and application process that extends across the middle and high school years. Family and community resources are also critical in creating learning experiences tied to a student's career interests. Research has regularly shown that strong school-family partnerships will enhance the learning outcomes of students and are possible even at the middle and high school grades with the proper programmatic approaches. Similarly, community influences can be marshaled in support of school programs that make a significant impact on their effectiveness.

Diplomas Now schools participate in the National Network of Partnership Schools, a program developed and extensively tested by Dr. Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University. The network brings together schools, districts, and states that are committed to developing and maintaining comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. As part of the network, Diplomas Now schools establish action teams that plan, carry out, and evaluate school, parent, and community partnership activities that support students' learning and school success. At the school level, an action team of school, family and community members is created and trained. It uses a framework of six types of involvement to plan and implement a collaborative effort, which each year targets, helps develop, and supports a specific area of the school improvement plan.

Each type of involvement includes many different practices of partnership. Each type has particular challenges that must be met in order to involve all families, and each type requires redefinitions of some basic principles of involvement. Finally, each type leads to different results for students, families, and teachers. The school will choose practices that will help achieve important goals and meet the needs of its students and families. In the middle schools, activities will focus on the college goal for every student and their awareness of broad career alternatives.



The six types of involvement of this framework are:

**Type 1--Parenting:** Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

**Type 2--Communicating:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

**TYPE 3--Volunteering:** Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

**Type 4—Learning At Home:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.

**Type 5—Decision Making:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

**Type 6—Collaborating with the Community:** Coordinate resources and services *for* families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services *to* the community.

In addition to using the NNPS model, Diplomas Now High Schools also engage community members in a variety of ways. First, we ask community members to take part in our planning process for implementation. During the planning process, community members provide valuable support determining the focus of Talent Development Career Academies, help the school make connections with external community agencies that can support student success in a variety of ways, and provide input to determine an effective communication plan that reaches a variety of stakeholders.

Once the school implements the Diplomas Now model, community partners continue to remain engaged in the school's education program in important ways. Community members have the opportunity to meet and connect with students during events such as the Freshman Seminar mock job interviews, school Career Fairs, and the school's quarterly Report Card Conferences. Additionally, Career Academies in grades 10-12 rely on partnerships with business and community organizations to engage students with guest speakers and instructors, develop job shadowing opportunities for students, internships, provide extended professional development opportunities for teachers, and mentor students interested in particular career pathways.

### 3. Intervention Plan

#### *Grade Levels Served*

Diplomas Now serves grades 6-12.

#### *Student Enrollment Assumptions:*

##### *Middle School*

Diplomas Now Middle Schools establish separate learning communities of 200 to 300 students. These small learning communities are traditionally organized into vertical houses with teaching teams (two or three teachers) being responsible for fewer than 100 students. TDMG recommends semi-

departmentalization and, when appropriate, looping. The resulting small, stable learning communities encourage students, teachers, and families to establish strong bonds and close, caring relationships.

## **Heterogeneous Grouping**

Many middle schools inadvertently foster low achievement by sorting some students into high-quality instruction while relegating others to lower-quality education. TDMG has demonstrated that all children are capable of succeeding in demanding courses when given appropriate support. Heterogeneous grouping for core academic classes helps TDMG schools reach high levels of academic performance. The TDMG program provides extra help for struggling students and training and ongoing support for teachers to ensure success for everyone in the heterogeneous classroom.

The Talent Development Middle Grades program organizes students in small learning communities of two to three classes each, with up to 25 students per class. Changes in enrollment can be accommodated by adjusting the number and grouping of small learning communities to fit the number of students actually enrolled.

## *High School*

The organizational structure of the TDHS model revolves around the use of interdisciplinary student teams. Each teacher team serves six sections of students, totaling from 120 to 180 students depending on state and local class size requirements. Schools must enroll at least 6 sections of ninth-graders to implement the TDHS Ninth Grade Academy model, and each 10-12 small learning community must enroll at least 6 sections of students to implement the TDHS Career Academy model. Increases in enrollment can be accommodated by creating new teams in the ninth grade. Typically, Career Academies incorporate two teacher teams to appropriately staff each academy. However, increases in enrollment in grades 10-12 can be accommodated through the creation of additional career academies.

## **Transformation Criteria**

Because Diplomas Now has been designed as comprehensive, research-based school turnaround approaches, it is able to meet each of the transformation criteria set forth in the RSFP. In some cases, Diplomas Now addresses the criteria using the same strategy in grades 6-12. For some criteria, different strategies will be implemented at the middle school and high school level.

### **1. School Culture and Climate**

***A. Establish a safe, orderly environment that is free from threat of physical harm and conducive to teaching, learning, and Schoolwide programs and policies to help maintain this environment.***

**B. Create a climate of high expectations for success.**

**C. Clearly articulate the school's mission so that staff share an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability.**

**D. Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement. Ensure that parents understand and support the school's basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve this mission.**

**E. Provide wrap-around services for low-income students so educators can focus on teaching and learning while ensuring students' social, emotional, and physical needs are met.**

Diplomas Now creates a school culture that values all students' talents and ability to learn, promotes academic achievement, and fosters strong relationships among students, adults, and staff. The Diplomas Now programs utilize several organizational structures that help schools create this desired school culture and maintain a climate that promotes academic achievement. While the specific approaches vary at the middle school and high school level, both Diplomas Now programs focus on the use of teacher teams, small learning communities, and specific climate and curriculum initiatives designed to build and maintain a positive school culture and climate.

### *Small Learning Communities*

In order to promote the strong teacher-student relationships that form the foundation of a safe, productive learning environment, schools must utilize organizational structures that promote the formation of these bonds. Diplomas Now employs the use of smaller learning communities as organizational structures that support strong relationships between students and teachers. These small learning communities create smaller units within large schools that decrease the sense of anonymity that students often face, increase the opportunities for students to get to know their teachers and one another, and foster lasting connections between individual students and their school. While there are some differences between the strategies and structures employed by TDMG and TDHS, both strive to create learning environments that promote these type of lasting bonds.

### *Middle School*

The school must be organized as a learning community to support stronger teacher-student bonds and address early adolescents' needs for affiliation with opportunities for supervised autonomy. Diplomas Now staff assists schools to attain judicious use of communal organization structures such as small learning communities, strategic semi-departmentalization, interdisciplinary teaming, and looping. These structures for caring give teachers the opportunity to work with a smaller group of students for longer periods of time, and facilitate closer connections with students and their families. Teachers are prepared to provide instruction in multiple courses so that teams of two or three teachers can cover all the classes of their shared students, establishing close caring relationships to achieve learning goals. Also, each student will have a single teacher as adviser-mentor during his/her time in the middle grades. The teacher adviser-mentor works with each student's instructional team to be alert for early warning signs and to address any problems of attendance, discipline, or learning.

### *High School*

The Talent Development High School model creates two types of small learning communities within the high school. Because ninth grade is such a critical transition year for students, Diplomas Now implements a Ninth Grade Success Academy that serves all ninth-graders within the high school. The Ninth Grade Success Academy has its own principal, a full-time staff that teaches only within the Ninth Grade Academy, and a self-contained physical space within the high school building. These critical

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elements of a Ninth Grade Success Academy allow a Diplomas Now high school to intentionally create a climate and culture that teaches new high school students the academic, social, and interpersonal skills that are necessary for success in grades 9-12 and beyond. By implementing a 4x4 block schedule and interdisciplinary teacher teams, the organizational structure used in the Ninth Grade Success Academy helps support lower student-teacher ratios and the formation of strong relationships between students and teachers.

In grades 10-12, students in a Diplomas Now high school enroll in a Career Academy. Like the Ninth Grade Success Academy, Career Academies each have a self-contained physical space within the building and an academy leader and staff members. Students elect to follow one of several “career pathways” within a Career Academy for their sophomore through senior years. All Career Academies employ identical, college preparatory academic course of studies that meet both Illinois standards as well as the ACT Common Core course of study recommendations. In addition to these core academic courses, students enroll in one or more career electives each year. These career courses help students develop new skill sets, make connections between skills learned in academic courses and the requirements of the workplace, and engage in coursework that prepares students for post-secondary success. In the Career Academies, both academic and career teachers share students within a specific career pathway, and continue to work with the same students from grade 10 through graduation.

### *Facilities Redesign*

As part of the small learning communities planning process, school stakeholders engage in space analysis and facilities redesign process. This process serves multiple purposes. First, it allows stakeholders to determine any necessary facilities upgrades or repairs necessary to implement the Diplomas Now model. Second, the facilities redesign allows the school to reassign classrooms so that small learning communities share discrete, contiguous areas of the school building. This layout promotes a sense of SLC identity and improves student relationships and collegiality among teachers. Finally, the facilities redesign process allows the planning team to reallocate special classrooms such as computer labs, administrative offices, and shared meeting spaces. To ensure that the facilities redesign develops goals and an action plan to support program implementation, Diplomas Now will train and support a school-based facilities planning team. This planning team, consisting of members of the leadership team, school staff, and other stakeholders such as parents and community members, will conduct the facilities redesign, and make final recommendations to the school leadership team during the planning year. Having school stakeholders “own” the facilities redesign provides both an early opportunity for distributed leadership and collective decision making as well as an increased likelihood of support from other stakeholders for the planning team’s recommendations. After the needs assessment is complete, Diplomas Now will coordinate with the district and the school to make any facility modifications necessary to accommodate the Small Learning Communities.

### *Teacher Teams*

Teacher teams are the core organizational unit of the small learning communities in a Diplomas Now school. By creating a team of teachers who share students, planning time, and a common vision about

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the school culture and climate they want to create in their school, the Diplomas Now model empowers teachers to take charge of creating a safe environment that promotes high-quality teaching and learning.

Diplomas Now focuses on the use of interdisciplinary teacher teams. These teams are made up of core academic teachers who share the same sections of students. Interdisciplinary teacher teams will meet several times each week during a common planning time to help promote a positive school culture and climate. Interdisciplinary teacher teams and on-site DN partners meet bi-weekly to review Early Warning Indicator data and create coordinated intervention programs for students who are struggling with behavior, attendance, and/or academic issues. ( A detailed description of the On-Track Indicators Meeting is found on page 15). Diplomas Now celebrations and interventions include quarterly Report Card Conferences, and monthly and quarterly student recognition programs. Teachers will also work together to design, implement, and adjust an academy-level set of policies regarding student expectations with regard to note-taking, missed work, and materials required for class. These policies provide students with a consistent and fair set of procedures for all classes.

## *Early Warning Indicator Systems*

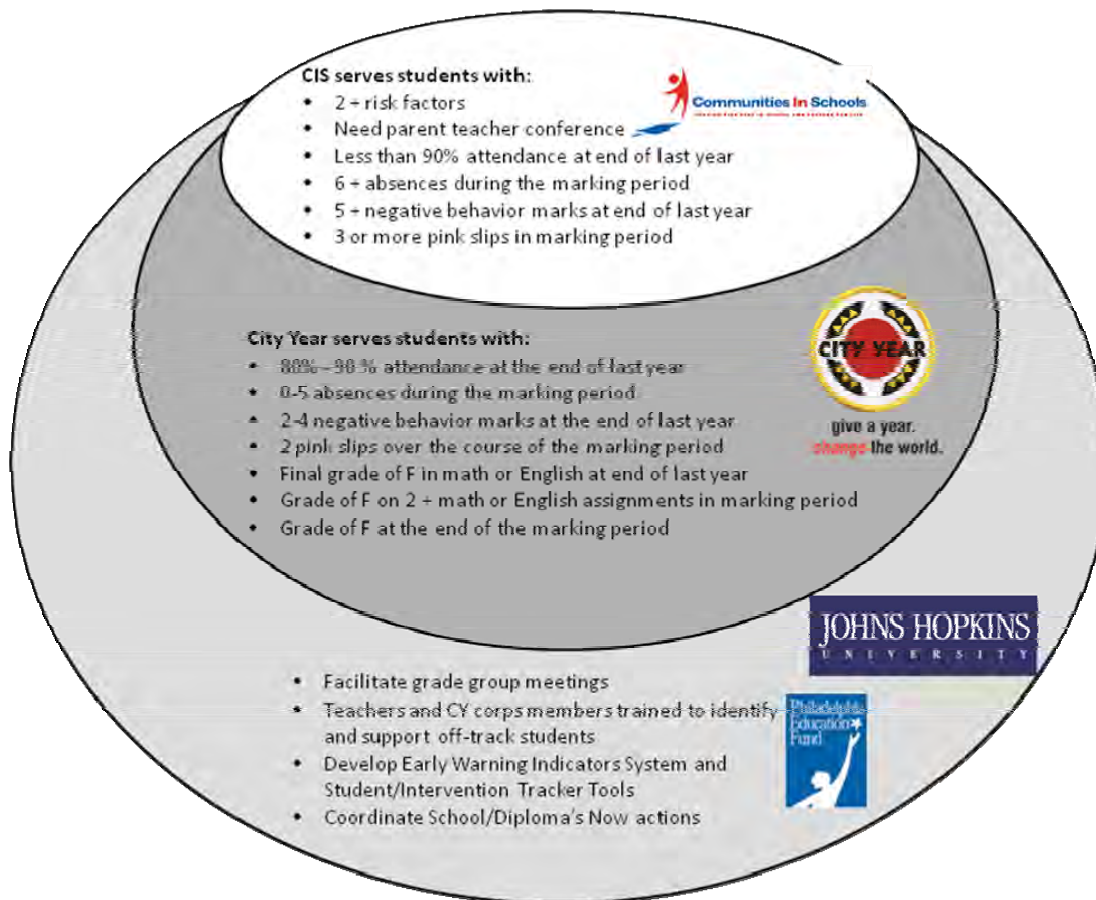
Even the best instructional program imaginable will have limited impact if students do not attend school, behave, and try hard to succeed. Traditional schools are organized to provide extra help and support to a limited number of students. Secondary schools that serve high concentrations of low-income students, however, need to be organized to provide supports to the majority of students. Our research has shown that in a high-poverty environment, in the sixth grade alone there can be 25 students with severe attendance problems, 25 additional students with behavioral challenges, 25 students failing math, and a different 25 failing English. Each of these outcomes (absent sustained intervention) results in only 1 in 4 of the students graduating from high school.

The question is, “How can secondary schools be organized to provide supports across multiple domains (attendance, behavior, and course performance) to this many students?” The solution is a teacher-friendly early warning system that alerts teachers as soon as students begin to demonstrate behaviors which, if left unattended, will begin to push them off the path to graduation. This early warning system in turn needs to be linked to a tiered response system that combines both proven prevention and intervention strategies and steadily increases the intensity of supports until the behavior (attendance, conduct, effort, and course performance) is mitigated.

The Diplomas Now on-track indicator and intervention systems is used to enable and insure comprehensive, seamless, and systematic school and student supports

- Used to inform teachers and support personnel as soon as students begin to demonstrate off-track behaviors (attendance, school and classroom miss-behavior, lack of effort, and poor course performance),
- Linked to research-based and practice validated interventions of increasing intensity
- Used to constantly evaluate effectiveness of whole school, extra, and intensive supports

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At the classroom level it shows teachers the students' prior year and prior quarter attendance, behavior, and course grades, as well as the most recently available information on their reading and math levels. Most importantly it is designed to highlight students who are beginning to fall off track (e.g. have had their second unexcused absence in a month, their second "pink slip" for poor classroom behavior, or have received a D or F in the most recent marking period or seen their grades dip).

Extending the on-track indicators to coursework, we have identified the intellectual products (types of books students can comprehend, levels and types of writing they can produce, mathematical, scientific and historical reasoning they can apply) that indicate students are ready to succeed in rigorous college-prep courses. Further, teacher teams back-map from these outcomes to establish quarterly mile posts that tell students, teachers, and parents that the student is on track to college readiness.

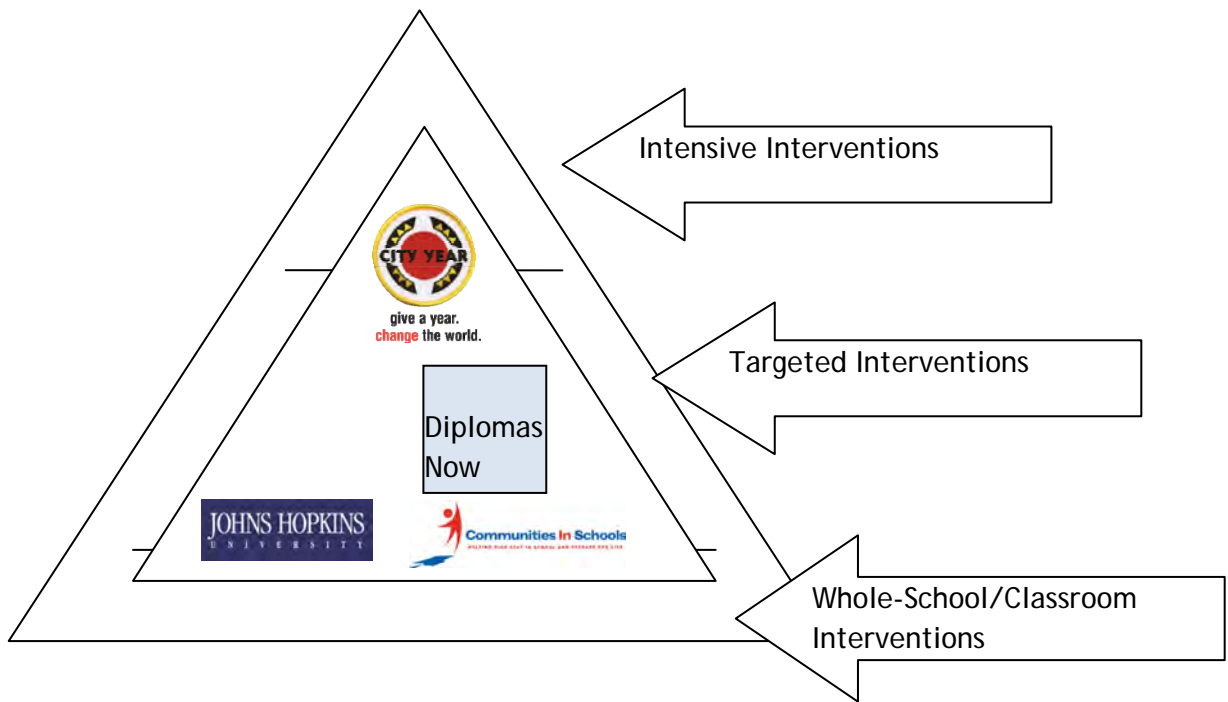
The Early Warning Indicator system is designed to identify students early and to provide the appropriate interventions as quickly as possible. With school staff closely following and using the Early Warning Indicators of attendance, behavior, and core course failure, students are identified as soon as they begin to exhibit warning signs. Starting with a review of student profiles in teacher teams before the school year begins, the Early Warning Indicators anchor school-based work throughout the year. In addition, the system helps to identify the intensity of services needed and to monitor impact. The process for

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collecting and disseminating data may vary, but the focus remains the same: early identification of students and timely provision of supports.

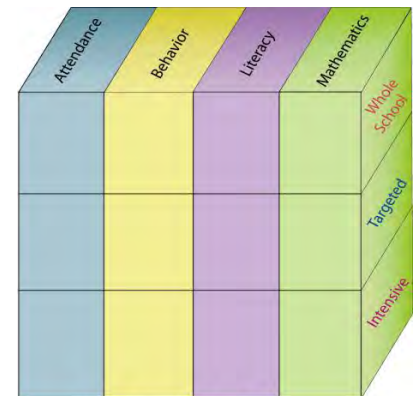
The **tiered intervention support system** is designed to use the Early Warning Indicator system to provide the *right resources to the right students at the right time*. The model is built on the recognition that all students need varied levels of supports, targeted and intensive. *Whole-school/classroom interventions* are designed to support all students and form the base of the model. Some students need *targeted interventions* because they are not able to succeed solely through whole-school/classroom supports. For example, *targeted interventions* can be small group activities or lessons that are designed for specific groups of students. Lastly, fewer students require *intensive supports* in order to succeed. For example, intensive support may include a one-on-one behavior modification plan facilitated by an adult. Diplomas Now is able to provide organizational support at the whole school level and additional supports at the *targeted and intensive levels* so that all staff at the school can provide interventions aligned to their expertise.



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With the Diplomas Now model, each site constructs a plan that spells out its tiers of support for off-track students and those who are close to being off-track. For each indicator, a Diplomas Now school determines the appropriate whole-school, targeted, and intensive interventions necessary to support all students so as to provide interventions at each level at the appropriate scale. It is helpful to think of this as a cube, shown in the diagram to the right. The “Cube” is used during planning to map interventions and is then used as a reference tool. In the diagram, the completed “Cube” provides the menu of interventions to be used in Early Warning Indicator meetings designed for staff teams to identify, implement and monitor student interventions.



**The Cube**

Students may receive supports from one tier or across the tiered intervention system. For instance, Communities In Schools may provide grief counseling to a student who needs intensive case management support but may also need targeted interventions to improve math skills designed and implemented by classroom teachers, City Year corps members, or others. While City Year is primarily focused on targeted interventions and Communities In Schools is primarily focused on intensive interventions, there is substantial crossover and both provide substantial support for whole-school interventions.

## On-Track Indicator Meetings

On-Track Indicator meetings, which should be held at least bi-weekly, provide the essential time for teachers to do the hands-on work necessary to drive Diplomas Now. Teacher teams select students with Early Warning Indicators and identify appropriate interventions inside and outside the classroom. At subsequent meetings, teachers revisit students being served to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions and determine next steps.

The goal of these meetings is for groups of teachers to design interventions and supports for individual students who they teach in common. Conversations should be structured so as to keep the focus on students and the necessary supports. Initial conversations should be framed around the following steps:

- Examine student early indicator profile(s) and other data
- Identify indicator of focus/concern
- Discuss potential interventions/ previous interventions
- Identify appropriate responder and intervention

Early on in subsequent meetings, members should discuss the extent to which decisions made previously were acted upon.

## **Attendees**

The individuals that are a part of this meeting should be the staff members that work with a specific group of individual students. This includes homeroom teachers, CY corps members, literacy/math leaders, CIS social workers, parent liaisons, and others. Below is a sample group for a meeting to discuss the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in sections 601 and 602:



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- Homeroom Teacher – 601
- Homeroom Teacher – 602
- Special Ed teacher – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Counselor
- Math lead – 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade
- City Year corps member – 601
- City Year corps member – 602
- CIS social worker – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- TD EWI organizational facilitator

## **Focus of the Meeting**

The goal is to focus the energy of the On-Track indicator meetings on students that are in high need and to provide sustained supports for those students. Each group of teachers should identify students at the beginning of the school year who exhibit one or more early indicators. It is recommended that this list should be no larger than 15 students at any one time and should be revisited at least every marking period.

### *A Team Approach to Student Discipline*

To create a successful learning environment, teachers must set high expectations for their students, teach students about these expectations and the behaviors and habits that will help students meet them, and help students modify behaviors that create an obstacle to success. The Diplomas Now model focuses on creating this framework toward expectations and student discipline through the teacher teams. First, Diplomas Now facilitates conversations with both the whole school faculty and individual teacher teams to build staff consensus around common expectations for students. After these common expectations are developed, Talent Development facilitators engage staff in work sessions where staff members create lessons and activities that will model expected behaviors for students, allow students the chance to practice these behaviors, and engage students in reflective discussions about why expected behaviors are an important contribution to success.

During the opening weeks of the school year, each teacher team teaches these lessons and activities around expected behaviors. Specific activities may include role playing, having students create a T-Chart that explains what a specific expectation “looks like” and “sounds like,” practicing specific procedures with students, and clearly explaining a system of incentives and consequences related to student behaviors. After this intense focus on expected behaviors during student orientation, teachers follow up with lessons regarding expected student behaviors and social skills throughout the school year.

Diplomas Now also provides professional development to school staff that assists them in developing a system of consequences for student behavior, focusing on minimizing disruptions to the learning process. During this professional development, teachers learn how to work with their team members to develop incentives that promote positive student behavior and to create progressive, consistent systems of consequences. These consequences focus on having students reflect upon inappropriate

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behaviors, while communications with students and parents about discipline focus on modifying rather than simply punishing behaviors that prevent a student from being successful in the classroom.

### *Talent Development Climate Initiatives*

Talent Development Climate helps middle and high schools create atmospheres that are safe, nurturing and positive by providing positive responses to appropriate behaviors, consistent consequences for inappropriate behaviors, and supports for students who have difficulty managing their behavior even with consistent rewards and consequences.

One of the main premises of TD climate is that students will behave properly when appropriate behavior is well known and gets more attention from school personnel than inappropriate behavior. The hallmark of TD Climate is the High Five As and Bs Behavior Standards that are used to continually and explicitly teach appropriate behavior in the classroom and other school settings.

The Talent Development *High Five As and Bs Climate Program* is school-wide, comprehensive, and based on the principles of positive behavior supports. The program has been used successfully in middle school, high school, and alternative school settings. Positive behavior support systems enhance students' motivation to attend school, follow school rules, and put forth effort to perform academically. These systems help the school community become welcoming, consistent, and nurturing. All students seek a positive, physically and emotionally safe pleasant environment, but for those students whose home lives or neighborhoods are marked by strife, neglect, or some type of struggle, the joys of a well-organized, consistent, and positive school climate are even more important.

As these behavior standards are consistently reinforced, students begin to replace existing inappropriate behaviors with more acceptable ones. The High Five As and Bs are: *attendance*, be on time and present every day; *achievement*, be ready and prepared to learn; *attitude*, be respectful; *accountability*, be responsible; and *awareness*, be safe. Lesson plans are used to explicitly teach these behavior standards so students know what is expected of them throughout the school building and especially in the classroom. These behavior standards are reviewed with students as often as necessary.

The Talent Development Climate Program allows students to look forward to something exciting happening on a regular basis. The program includes celebrations to reward students who demonstrate positive behaviors, including honor roll students, students of the month, those with perfect attendance, those "most improved," and students who are "caught doing something good."

Most students will respond well to environments that are positive and nurturing, where behavior expectations are clear and explicit, and where awards for following the rules are consistent and enjoyable. Still, some students will need extra support to comply with school rules. These students have an even greater need to feel cared for. As a result, making students feel cared for is important even when there is a need for discipline. One strategy included in the Talent Development Climate Program is the use of a Reflection Room. Students may be able to avoid getting into further trouble if they have somewhere they can go to calm down and talk problems out with an adult who reminds them of school expectations. Students may be given an opportunity to apologize or make it right with the

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person they are at odds with. Another way to help students with their behavior is to have them monitor themselves with daily progress reports based on the High Five As and Bs. These are proactive strategies that help students stay on track.

TD Climate is comprised of the following ten programs that provide rewards, consequences and additional support for troubled behaviors. TD and the administration customize the approach to determine which of these components are used. A member of the school staff runs each program with support from a TD climate facilitator. TD climate programs include:

- Dinner with the Principal (Students of the Month) - a monthly rewards program based on High Five As and Bs that allows students, family members, and school community leaders to interact in a casual setting.
- Classroom rewards (token economy) - helps classroom teachers manage and modify undesirable behaviors through consistency, positive reinforcement, and character building.
- Staff appreciation (at least twice a year) - designed to build camaraderie between the teachers and administrators.
- Anger management – teaches cognitive behavior management and coping skills to students who display impulsive anger outbursts
- Late Room – a central location where late students can be processed and learn there are consequences to being late.
- Reflection Room – quiet and peaceful settings where students think about their behavior, display evidence of a change in attitude and ability to stay on task for up to two academic periods.
- Success Suite (in school suspension) – a consequence for non-violent behavior infractions where students learn cognitive behavior management skills as well as complete academic assignments for periods lasting up to three days.
- Behavior Intervention Team and Behavior Intervention Plans – responsible for identifying and assisting students who need specialized behavior modification/intervention strategies and monitoring, based on the High Five As and Bs.
- Bully prevention program – teaches students to become a caring majority where bullying is not popular and victims are helped.
- Caught You Doing Something Good! – promotes High Five behaviors in hallways, stairways, and the cafeteria.
- Caught You Doing Something Good! - promotes High Five Behaviors in hallways, stairways, and the cafeteria.

### *Freshman Seminar*

Freshman Seminar (FS) is a course offered during the first semester of ninth grade. In-depth lessons use a variety of both innovative and traditional teaching techniques including long-range projects, cooperative learning activities, and reflective journal writing. Students practice the note-taking, time management, study, social and human relations skills they need every day in their academic and elective

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subjects and in their lives outside of school. They learn more about themselves and their futures in the worlds of postsecondary education and careers as they prepare to choose a Career Academy.

## *Twilight School*

The model includes opportunities outside the typical school day for students who are not succeeding in traditional classrooms or for those with special scheduling needs, such as teen parents, students who work, and students returning from suspension and incarceration. Flex-school, Saturday school, and Twilight School are alternative programs operating within the comprehensive high school. The programs take different forms: some meet for three or four hours after school; others meet during the school day, but on a schedule separate from the rest of the school and in a dedicated space. The primary goals are credit completion and recovery for struggling and non-traditional students; the programs often incorporate counseling and social services as well.

City Year brings its culture of idealism into the schools using structures and tools to promote a community and individual mind-set of "I can (belief in self), I will (perseverance), I want (desire to do one's best), and I strive (reach for stretch goals)" ; City Year teams also promote school spirit using activities to promote school values and positive school experiences

More adults in the school and classroom increases youth access to a consistent, caring, positive adult relationships in schools which research shows to be a critical school success factor. City Year adapts its corps leadership development program to the school setting for students by teaching students the skills of teamwork, group/class participation, school work organization, self-management of emotions (conflict management), school navigation (ask for help, timeliness, appropriate teacher interactions, etc). Research has shown that frequency of contact with City Year corps members is significantly associated with positive outcomes in conflict resolution, resilience and academic motivation.

## *Supporting the Needs of All Students*

The core philosophy of the Diplomas Now model revolves around the belief that all students can be successful given the appropriate type and level of supports. Diplomas Now incorporates a number of practices that reflect this belief developed for secondary schools. First, Diplomas Now works with schools to build small learning communities that are both accessible to all students and have equitable distributions of student programs. Special education students and English Language Learner (ELL) students are enrolled in the same small learning communities as their peers, participate in team building activities, incentive programs, and celebrations with their team- and academy-mates, and have the opportunity to enroll in the same courses as their peers. Diplomas Now supports the instruction of special education students in the least restrictive environment by:

- including special education teachers in the planning and professional development related to implementation of the Diplomas Now program
- providing professional development, coaching, and facilitated planning and reflection related to co-teaching and collaboration between subject area and special education teachers

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- assisting with the development of appropriate modifications and accommodations to Talent Development curricula and instructional strategies
- creating master schedules that allow for special education students to receive support in an inclusive, least restrictive environment

To help ensure the success of ELL students, Diplomas Now provides professional development and coaching around the Talent Development curricula and instructional strategies. During this professional development, TD facilitators work with coaches and teachers to develop units and lessons that blend successful academic instruction with the additional scaffolds necessary to support ELL students. In some cases, Talent Development's Spanish Language materials support Spanish speaking ELL students in their academic courses. In other cases, Talent Development works with a school's ELL staff to pair Talent Development curricula with existing ELL resources and strategies such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Whenever possible and educationally appropriate, Talent Development works to schedule ELL students in integrated academic and elective courses.

The Diplomas Now model provides an integrated model of support for students in at-risk situations. First, Diplomas Now strives to provide a nurturing environment where teachers develop strong, positive relationships with their students. This type of stable environment provides a positive setting for students in at-risk situations. Throughout the curriculum, students learn about the dangers of at-risk behavior as well as strategies to successfully navigate challenging situations outside of school where they may be tempted to engage in at-risk behavior. Additionally, Diplomas Now EWI data system ensures that at-risk students who are demonstrating off-track behaviors are assigned interventions that support student learning during the school day, and if necessary, seek out social support services that attempt to remedy situations outside of the school that are negatively impacting a student's ability to learn.

Diplomas Now will work with the partnering district and school to ensure that the school provides all district services designed to assist homeless students. Homeless students will be exempted from lotteries and other enrollment selection systems to ensure immediate enrollment in the school and academy of their choice. All staff members will take part in professional development to ensure sensitive, inclusive treatment of homeless students. The school will provide necessary resources to ensure that homeless students and their parents have the means to take public transportation to and from the school. Counselors and the Diplomas Now organizational facilitator work with the school to ensure that homeless students receive additional support, including connecting students to state, local, and community-based social support. Diplomas Now will work with the school to ensure that teachers and other staff regularly communicate with parents of homeless students to ensure that families are aware of all social services, and are invited to take part in school activities.

In addition to participating in the in-school and after school service provided by the corps members, students from each school will be encouraged to participate in City Year's Young Heroes program, a Saturday-based service-learning and leadership development program. Starting each January and continuing for 15 Saturdays through May, the Young Heroes program brings together a group of diverse

middle school youth from Chicago for three Saturdays each month (and then once each month from June – December). Program participants focus on learning about, addressing, and conducting service projects around pressing community issues, such as violence, hunger and homelessness, poverty, environmental problems, racism and prejudice. Youth surveys indicate that Heroes participants are more motivated to achieve and succeed in school and to become more involved in their communities.

## 2. Developing teacher and school leader effectiveness.

***A. Designate a principal or other school-level leader who will act as an instructional leader. Depending on the intervention model, the "school-level leader" may be a principal designated by the district, a leader working under the direction of a Lead Partner, or a person hired by the Lead Partner.***

***The model must either:***

- ***Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model; or***
- ***Use a fair and consistent method to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing principal and determine whether the principal can serve as the instructional leader for the intervention.***

Diplomas Now plans for principal hiring, retention, review oversight and evaluation will be influenced by and comply with the definitive protocols (and/or laws) governing the evaluation of principals in Illinois.

Such factors having potential influence include: (Ref. 105ILCS 5/24 A-15) Sec. 24A-15, P.A. 94–1039.

- Establishment of a principal evaluation plan that:
  1. includes a timeframe for evaluation (e.g. single-year contract by February 1 of each year; multi-year contract by February 1 of final year; opportunity for additional evaluations may be included)
  2. provides a description of duties, responsibilities and standards
  3. is performed (and completed in writing) by a district superintendent, superintendent's designee, or an individual appointed by the School Board, who holds a registered 75 state administrative certificate
  4. considers the principal's
    - specific duties, responsibilities, management and competence
    - strengths and weaknesses, with supportive data
    - aligns with the Illinois Professional Standards for School Leaders or research-based district standards

### Principal evaluation

Diplomas Now supports evaluative criteria for the principal that directly relates to agreed-upon, acknowledged goals for effective, successful implementation of its model. Researchers and practitioners believe such evaluative criteria should relate to/include an analysis of progress made in accomplishing predetermined, agreed upon objectives.

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Preliminary steps for determining objectives-related evaluative measures include identification of rubrics for:

- best practices
- performance assessment
- performance improvement

Suggested broad indicators to be addressed (and assessed) in the evaluation of principals include:

- Instructional and curriculum knowledge and management skills
- Diplomas Now Program understanding and competence
- Management and operations capabilities (staff, students, facilities, fiscal)
- Student and staff performance
- Staff support, assistance and evaluation
- Student and staff relationships
- Parent, family and community engagement
- Instructional technology and telecommunication skills
- Analysis, interpretation and use of data in support of improved student performance and effective program implementation

## Related Proficiency Preferences

- Budget development, implementation, management
- Instructional skills (knowledge, understanding, experience)
- Leadership skills (knowledge and application)
- Oral and written communication skills
- Organizational and operational abilities
- Program assessment and evaluation skills
- Problem analysis/problem solving
- Effective interpersonal relationship skills
- Creativity, initiative in program planning and development
- Evaluation, monitoring and assessment (knowledge, experience, effective application)
- Capacity for working collaboratively (coordinating, cooperating, contributing)

Principals of a Diplomas Now school must assume prime responsibility and oversight for effective program implementation through efficient organization of time, students, staff and resources that ultimately leads to improved student achievement. Organization of time and staff to accommodate improved student achievement requires the principal to demonstrate, and where necessary, develop strong management and leadership abilities.

Strategies for assessing the effectiveness of the principal identified to lead the reform effort will be finalized following a review and consideration of evaluation procedures specific to the school/district. Such reviews will be used to align the Diplomas Now principal evaluation process with agreed-upon elements of the model used by the school. Ultimately, the goal will be to produce an evaluation

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instrument that meets the defined requirements of TDHS principal evaluation and is compliant with the expectations of the school/district.

Valid and definitive measures will be consistently applied to determine the adequacy of current principals to successfully lead the school improvement effort, using the Diplomas Now model. The parameters for this process include:

## Standard Requirements

- Endorsement, certification, validation, as a secondary school administrator, based on Illinois State Department of Education standards (or eligibility for same)
- Verification of non-traditional secondary school administrative endorsement, approval, acceptance, per Illinois state requirements
- Confirmed, verified evaluations\* of satisfactory, or above, service in a secondary school administrative position or a position acknowledged as comparable (\*a minimum of two evaluations, completed within the three-year timeframe)

## Purpose Statements: TDHS Principal Evaluation

The principal evaluation will be designed to meet these basic purposes:

1. To identify the skills, abilities, and practices necessary for effective, satisfactory and successful performance as a principal
2. To encourage, acknowledge, and recognize successful performance, validated by evidence of accomplishment (re: identified criteria—student achievement; Diplomas Now model implementation; student and staff performance; other)
3. To identify performance-related needs, as appropriate, and determine actions for assistance, support and/or resolution

## Comments on the Diplomas Now Principal Evaluation Process

1. An annual, formal evaluation, including a written document and an oral presentation conference (dialogue, discussion), will be completed.
2. A preliminary conference will be held annually (before the start of the school year) to articulate program, school, and professional goals. Such goals will form the basis for specific aspects of the annual principal evaluation. A schedule will be developed to support a formative process during which goals will be assessed intermittently. The formative process will allow opportunities for timely and direct response to identified needs, as well as acknowledgement and recognition of successes and achievements. **Note: The Diplomas Now “Implementation Review” will be compatible with this process.**
3. The recommended timeline for the formative process: 3 times, once each quarter (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) of the school year. The annual principal evaluation will occur at the conclusion of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the school year.



4. A contingent component of the principal evaluation will be designed to address any identified/confirmed need for a ***“Principal Assistance/Growth Plan.”*** Such a plan, if used, will focus on specific areas of need, interest and/or deficiency related to:
  1. professional skills (related to listed expectations of the position)
  2. effective leadership
  3. management, administration, and/or operations
  4. professional enrichment (experiences to complement and expand successful performance as a principal)

Appropriate action plans will be developed to support implementation of the ***“Principal Assistance/Growth Plan.”***

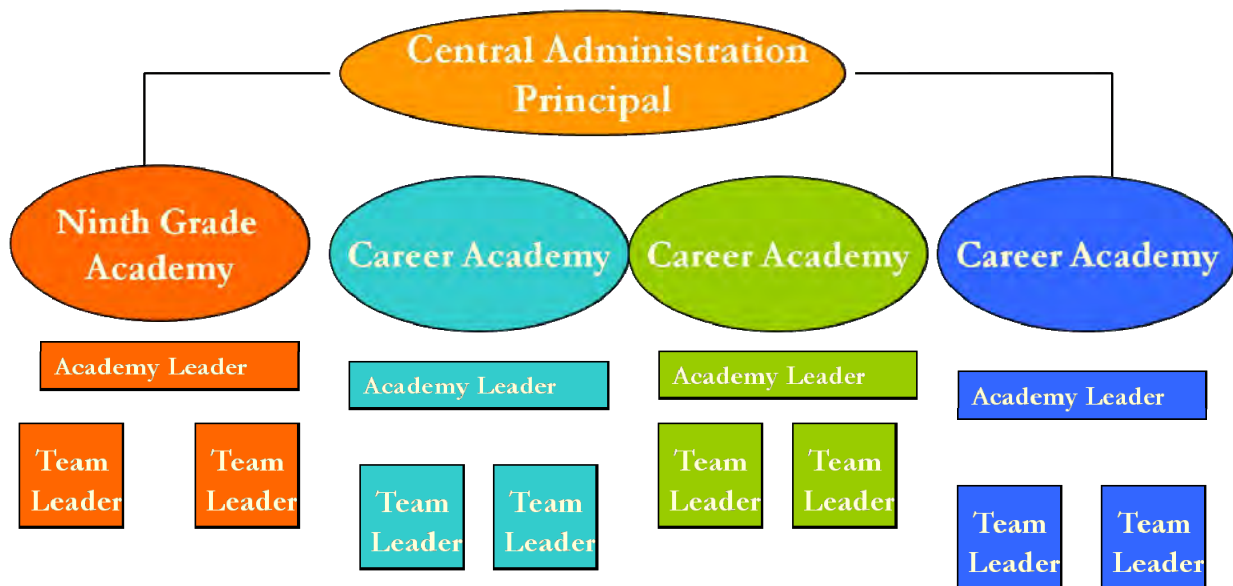
5. The ***“Principal Evaluation instrument”*** will include protocols for intermittent assessment of its appropriateness, validity, and adequacy. Opportunities to solicit feedback and comments from principals, as well as other potential stakeholders (district staff, teachers, researchers, etc.), will be included in the overall assessment of the principal evaluation instrument and activities and procedures related to its use.

***B. Over the course of the intervention, the school must make a transition to a distributed leadership model with a highly capable leadership team working to build a cohesive, professional teaching culture. The plan for a distributed leadership team must include the school-level leader and teachers with augmented school roles.***

In the targeted regions, middle grades are included in K-8 schools. A Diplomas Now middle grades site would have a limited impact on administrative structure in these schools, as their administration and support staff are responsible for both elementary and middle grades. However, Diplomas Now implemented in grades 6-8 will foster the development of a highly capable team of instructional staff at the middle grades level. The teacher team responsible for each middle grades small learning community engages in collective decision-making about individual students as well as planning activities and selecting rigorous middle-grades curriculum to achieve desired learning goals, just as teacher teams do at the high school level (described in greater detail below). In addition, Diplomas Now works with schools to identify on-site, content-area coaches and provides them with the necessary training to support effective implementation of the Diplomas Now model.

The following figure demonstrates the distributed leadership organizational structure at a Diplomas Now/ Talent Development High School.

## The Organization of a Talent Development School



**Note:** This organizational structure would service a school with up to 450 9<sup>th</sup> graders and up to 900 students in grades 10-12. The number of teams in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy, as well as the number of Career Academies, would be based on school size.

TDHS embeds distributed leadership and shared accountability through both its organizational and instructional structures. The small learning community structure empowers teacher teams to make a variety of decisions that affect daily instructional activities, resource distribution, and school policies that impact climate, teaching, and learning. First, teacher teams engage in weekly reviews of student level data (the Early Warning Indicator or EWI reports) summarizing student outcome data on attendance, behavior, and course passing. Teams then make front-line decisions based on their professional experience and daily interactions with students about what interventions the team and school should implement to ensure students remain on the path to graduation.

Because these decisions require the school to commit resources such as social workers, emotional-social support programs, and supplemental education services (SES), teachers' voices and collaborative decision-making have a significant impact on resource distribution in a Diplomas Now school. Additionally, Diplomas Now allocates a budget to each small learning community to support incentive programs, extended learning activities, and parent and community involvement programs. Teachers and other staff members at the SLC and teacher team levels engage in a collaborative decision-making process about the use of these funds and take responsibility for developing budgets, planning and implementing, and monitoring the impact of these activities. As a result, the faculty and staff of each

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SLC engage in distributed leadership and shared accountability for the events that create a positive culture and climate within their academy.

In addition, teachers and staff members engage in collaborative decision-making about school policies that impact culture, climate, and instruction. Specifically, each SLC receives professional development that focuses on building its capacity to design and implement action plans that focus on communications, student attendance, discipline, and academic achievement plans for their students. This process involves teachers in analyzing data trends, establishing goals for their students and themselves, creating specific plans for implementing strategies and activities focused on helping students succeed, and establishing a system for monitoring and adjusting these plans. This approach to developing policies with a direct impact on students allows Diplomas Now schools to benefit from the significant knowledge, experiences, and professional learning of the entire staff, and results in policies that are “owned” by the entire faculty, rather than policies that are imposed from a traditional top-down administrative structure.

Like the organizational structure, the TDHS instructional program also emphasizes distributed leadership and shared accountability focused on the school’s mission of ensuring that all students graduate prepared for post-secondary success. The TDHS professional development system revolves around the use of job-embedded professional development provided by instructional coaches. These coaches are members of the faculty, not the management, who focus on modeling, co-teaching, and engaging in guided reflection with their content area colleagues. Instructional coaches receive significant amounts of professional development from Diplomas Now on developing trusting relationships with their colleagues, developing co-constructed professional development plans with teachers, and engaging in reflective practices that empower teachers to have a voice in their own professional growth. TDHS instructional coaches do not take part in the teacher evaluation process, maintain confidential relationships with their teaching colleagues, and do not provide information to administrators about the performance of the teachers the coaches work with in their content areas.

Along with this focus on collaborative, peer-provided professional development, teachers also engage in collaborative decision-making with the administration regarding curriculum development and course scheduling. As part of the scheduling process, the small learning academies and teacher teams work with administrators to determine what career and general electives to offer at the school, what teachers are best suited to teach certain courses, and how to engage students in making decisions about their own schedules and graduation plans. Additionally, teachers in the 10-12 “Career Academies” take on the task of developing recruitment and marketing plans to assist ninth- graders in making an informed decision when choosing their Career Academy for grades 10-12.

***C. In coordination with the Lead Partner, the district and school-level leader must use evaluations that are based in significant measure on student growth:***

- ***to improve teachers' and school leaders' performance;***
- ***identify and reward effective performance; and***
- ***identify and address ineffective performance.***

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Diplomas Now can support school and district leadership in their staff evaluation process by providing both student and school outcome data and frameworks and criteria for evaluation of staff performance. As part of its ongoing system of data collection and analysis, Diplomas Now provides school-, team-, and teacher- level data in the following areas:

- Course performance (passing rates and grade distribution)
- Student attendance
- Behavior indicators (suspensions, office referrals, and student infractions)
- Student achievement (standardized assessments, course and unit assessments)

Diplomas Now will work with the district to offer teacher team and academy based recognitions for success in achieving the school's mission and significant improvements in student achievement, performance indicators, and growth.

Additionally, Diplomas Now can provide school and district leadership with frameworks for evaluation of the model. These frameworks include rubrics for evaluation of various elements of program implementation, guidelines and organizers for school and classroom walkthroughs, and criteria to evaluate school initiatives aimed at climate, culture, and distributed leadership.

### ***D. Provide relevant, ongoing, high-quality job-embedded professional development.***

The Diplomas Now school turnaround model provides ongoing, job-embedded professional development in a variety of ways. First, Diplomas Now engages staff members in intensive, pre-service training that allows teachers to learn about the Talent Development curriculum and organizational structures, practice teaching lessons using the Talent Development instructional components, and engage in collaborative decision making and planning for the upcoming school year. This pre-service training is facilitated by a team of Talent Development facilitators charged with ensuring that school staff receives the information and skills necessary to implement the model.

Once the school year begins, the Diplomas Now model uses instructional coaches at both the middle and high school levels to provide job-embedded professional development on an ongoing basis. These instructional coaches engage in collaborative planning and teaching, model new lessons and instructional strategies for teachers, and facilitate guided reflection with teaching staff to increase the capacity for high impact teaching and learning. While the specific focus of professional development varies depending on staff needs, student outcome data and Talent Development's evaluation of implementation levels guides stakeholders' decisions regarding the scope and sequence of professional development activities. Diplomas Now builds the capacity of these instructional coaches by providing an annual Coaches Institute each summer and by providing ongoing job-embedded professional development for coaches through regular visits to school sites by instructional facilitators.

While instructional coaches provide job-embedded professional development focused on teaching and learning, the Diplomas Now organizational facilitator provides job-embedded professional development that is focused on the school's organization, culture, and climate. Before implementation, Diplomas Now trains and supports the organizational facilitator to lead the school's early warning and tiered

intervention process. During this planning phase, the Diplomas Now organizational facilitator organizes the staff into various planning committees and facilitates the collective decision-making, planning, and work that they conduct, assists the school's leadership team in the reorganization of the school, and provides technical assistance on issues related to scheduling, staffing, and strategic and tactical planning for implementation. After implementation, the Diplomas Now organizational facilitator focuses on providing ongoing job-embedded development and technical assistance to the administrators, team leaders, teacher teams, counselors, and support staff. These professional development activities focus on increasing the school's capacity to build a positive school climate, build and sustain a system of distributive leadership, and engage in ongoing collective decision-making and actions that support student success.

In addition to the job-embedded professional development provided by instructional coaches and the organizational facilitator, instructional staff members also work with one another to increase their collective instructional capacity. During their common planning period, teacher teams examine student work, engage in interdisciplinary planning, and share best practices in an effort to improve instruction. Further, academy leaders, instructional coaches, and other instructional support staff help organize and facilitate peer observations, visits to other classrooms and school sites, and other job-embedded professional development activities.

The professional development plan at each Diplomas Now school is developed in three stages. First, Diplomas Now works with the school leadership team to schedule standard professional development modules required in all new Diplomas Now schools. The second stage occurs through surveying the school's staff to gather information regarding their professional development needs. Finally, student outcome data is analyzed on an ongoing basis to determine the need for further professional development in specific areas. .

Professional development for a Diplomas Now middle grades site typically begins in the summer months before the first year of implementation. Instructional staff attend a two- to three-day workshop initiating them in the workings of the TDMG model. Professional development provided to teachers in all content areas includes such topics as

- Characteristics of early adolescence
- Cooperative learning strategies
- The Diplomas Now School Climate program
- Teaching in the extended (75- to 90-minute) period
- Literacy in the content areas
- Other topics as identified through needs assessment

Subject-specific professional development in the use of TDMG curricula is also provided to content area teachers. During the school year, TDMG facilitators provide monthly customized, ongoing grade- and content-specific professional development and in-classroom support to ensure strong implementation of the TDMG instructional program.

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The following table provides an overview of the professional development for the planning year and the first two years of implementation for Diplomas Now High Schools.

Table 1: Professional Development Outline for First 3 Years of Partnership

Year	Instructional Professional Development	Organization/Climate Professional Development	Other Professional Development
Planning Year	<p>Curriculum alignment training</p> <p>Training of instructional coaches</p> <p>Leadership Team Team-Building and Retreat</p> <p>Teaching in the Extended Block I</p> <p>Talent Development Coaches Institute (Summer Opportunity at Johns Hopkins University)</p> <p>Diplomas Now National Summer Institute for school and district leadership.</p>	<p>Career Academy Development</p> <p>Ninth Grade Success Academy Development</p> <p>Opening Strong (planning for school opening)</p>	<p>Talent Development Awareness PD</p> <p>Technical Assistance and Professional Development to Set Up Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting Systems (EWI)</p> <p>Professional Development Around Master Scheduling</p>
Year 1	<p>Pre-Service Training for all Talent Development Courses</p> <p>Teaching in the Extended Block II</p> <p>Classroom Management</p> <p>Transition Training (from Talent Development courses to core courses)</p> <p>Ongoing Professional Development for Instructional Coaches</p>	<p>Team Building for teachers team</p> <p>Effective Teaming Training for teacher teams</p> <p>Building External Partnerships (Career Partnerships)</p> <p>National Network for Partnership Schools training</p> <p>Talent Development Climate Training</p> <p>Ongoing Leadership Training for Leadership Team</p>	<p>Ongoing training for schedulers</p> <p>Ongoing professional development for counselors</p>

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Year 2	Looking at student work Interdisciplinary planning and teaching Blended Instruction (Career/Academic blending) Teaching in the Extended Block III Other topics as identified by student data and teacher feedback	Building the Capacity of teacher teams Building the Capacity of the Leadership team Other topics as identified by student data and teacher feedback	
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**E. Implement strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain high-quality staff, including intensive induction and mentoring support for teachers.**

In order to ensure that Diplomas Now schools are able to recruit, place, and retain a high-quality staff, Diplomas Now first works closely with the school and district leadership to create a staffing plan that will meet all of the needs of the school’s population. However, a few general guidelines can be provided to give some ideas around staffing needs:

*Middle Grades*

Typically, in k-8 schools, the adoption of Diplomas Now for middle grades does not impact administrative and support staffing. Middle grades classes of 25 students each are organized in small learning communities of two to three classes each, with a teacher team of 2-3 teachers per small learning community. (Typically, one teacher in each team provides instruction in RELA and social studies, while the other teacher provides math and science instruction.) Thus, a school would have 4 middle grades teachers for every 100 students. In addition, special education teachers and ELL staff are needed in proportion to the number of students requiring services in these areas. Depending on the size of the school, middle grades students could share elective area teachers (such as physical education) with the elementary grades or have elective staff focused solely on middle grades.

*High School*

1. A Diplomas Now high school will have one 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy and one Career Academy for every 300 students in grades 10-12. This means that the high school will need 1 principal, 1 academy principal for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and 1 academy principal for every 300 students in grades 10-12.
2. For every 150 students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, a teacher team of 8 teachers will be created. This does not include special education or ELL teachers.
3. Schools should staff each academy with its own guidance counselor. The school should staff at least one social worker unless ongoing access to district social workers is available.

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4. Each Career Academy will have two teacher teams of 8 teachers per team. This does not include special education or ELL teachers
5. Every Diplomas Now School will need 3 positions to staff a language arts coach, mathematics coach, and Freshman Seminar coach.
6. Special Education and ELL staffing needs can only be determined after examining school data and working with school and district staff.
7. In addition to the staff on teacher teams, schools will need to hire additional staff for certain electives and to offer reduced teaching schedules to team leaders.

The following is a sample staffing model for a 600-student high school . The sample school has 150 students per grade level, and enrolls approximately 225 students in each Career Academy. Approximately 17% of the students have IEPs, and there is no ELL population.

### *Sample Staffing Plan*

Diplomas Now will staff the Ninth Grade Success Academy as follows:

Academy Leader	1
Clerk (Support)	1
Security (Support)	2
Counselor	1
Special Education Teachers	2.3 (1/3 for case manager)
English/Language Arts Teachers	2
Mathematics Teachers	2
Science Teachers	2
Physical Education Teachers	2
<b>Total Ninth Grade Academy Administrative Staff</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total Ninth Grade Academy Instructional Staff</b>	<b>11.3</b>
<b>Total Ninth Grade Academy Support Staff</b>	<b>3</b>

Student to Adult Ratio in Ninth Grade Success Academy: 11:1



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Diplomas Now will staff each Career Academy as follows:

Academy Leader	1
Clerk (Support)	1
Security (Support)	2
Counselor	1
Special Education Teachers (Assigned By District)	2.3 (1/3 for case manager)
English/Language Arts Teachers	2.5 (1 English teacher shared by both academies)
Mathematics Teachers	2.5 (1 math teacher shared by both academies)
Science Teachers	1.5 (1 science teacher shared by both academies)
Career Elective Teachers	3
Social Studies Teachers	2
Foreign Language Teacher	1
Arts Teacher	1
<b>Total Administrative Staff for Career Academies</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Instructional Staff for Career Academies</b>	<b>33.6</b>
<b>Total Support Staff for Career Academies</b>	<b>6</b>

Student to Adult Ratio in Career Academy= 10:1

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Diplomas Now will also utilize the following positions for the entire school:

Principal	1
Business Manager (Support)	1
Attendance/Data Clerk (Support)	1
Language Arts Coach	1
Mathematics Coach	1
Freshman Seminar Coach	1
Elective Teacher	1
Whole School Administration	1
Whole School Instructional Staff	4
Whole School Support Staff	2
Total Administrative Staff	4
Total Instructional Staff	49
Total Support Staff (Does not include engineering, custodial, or food services staff)	13

### *Teacher Schedule*

In a Diplomas Now school, the daily teacher schedule consists of 3 teaching periods and 1 planning period. Each period is 75-90 minutes depending on the grade level (9-12 is 90 minutes; 6-8 may be 75-90 minutes). While common planning time for teacher teams can take place during the teachers' planning period, many Diplomas Now schools also elect to include 45-60 minutes of planning time outside of the student school day. This additional planning time allows for additional work in content areas and with teacher teams. Teachers in Diplomas Now schools will teach at least 170 instructional days. In addition, Diplomas Now schools have at least 5 days of professional development prior to the start of the school year, and a minimum of 8 professional development days during the school year, totaling a minimum of 183 days of contracted employment each school year.

### *Teacher Placement, Induction, and Mentoring*

Talent Development implements several strategies designed to place and retain high quality staff. First, during the planning of small learning communities and teacher teams, Diplomas Now assists school leadership to ensure that each SLC and team has an equitable distribution of both master and early career teachers. By creating this distribution of teaching staff, teachers with more experience can serve

as mentors and professional resources for new teachers, particularly during team meetings and other professional learning opportunities held during common planning time. Additionally, Talent Development engages in intensive pre-service professional development with all staff members. This pre-service training is especially beneficial for new and early career teachers, who are often still developing frameworks for effective instruction and are in need of strategies for developing strong relationships with students.

The Diplomas Now focus on coaching as the primary means of job-embedded professional development also provides an ongoing means of mentoring new and early career teachers. Specifically, the opportunities for newer teachers to watch coaches engage in model lessons as well as the ongoing reflective dialogue between coaches and newer teachers can have a profound impact on newer teachers' ability to successfully build relationships with their students and deliver instruction. As research on successful teacher retention has indicated, this focus on increasing teacher capacity while providing ongoing support encompasses two of the critical elements of successful induction programs.

### **3. Comprehensive instructional reform strategies.**

***A. Use data to identify and implement comprehensive, research-based, instructional programs that are vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards. The instructional programs must include:***

- ***development and use of frequent formative assessments permitting rapid-time analysis, feedback, and targeted instruction;***
- ***other data-driven instructional systems and strategies.***

***B. Differentiate instruction to meet students' needs, including personalized academic and non-academic support services.***

The Diplomas Now school turnaround model focuses on creating a course of study that supports and challenges all learners and delivering instruction using strategies that engage students with diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and interests. The Diplomas Now model meets these diverse needs in several ways. First, reading selections in both the middle school and high school language arts curricula reflect authors and themes for a variety of backgrounds. As part of reading these texts, teachers engage students in a variety of activities that build up students' knowledge about cultures and viewpoints that differ from their own. Additionally, the Talent Development Middle School social studies course revolves around *The History of Us* book series. This set of social studies resources teaches the history of the United States utilizing varying perspectives that reflect both our shared heritage as well as the unique experiences of different genders, races, and cultures.

In addition to cultural diversity, Diplomas Now also develops instructional activities that focus on engaging students with a variety of learning styles. Both TDMG and TDHS provide teachers with training and resources that allow them to assess both students' learning styles and skill levels. Talent Development curricula provides units and lessons that employ a variety of visual, text-based, kinesthetic, and auditory activities at the individual, small group, and whole class level. Many courses also build individual learning centers into the extended period to allow teachers to incorporate activities

that allow students to focus on building and reinforcing skills that are necessary for each individual student to succeed in that content area. In addition to these curricula, Talent Development facilitators spend a significant amount of time training both teachers and school instructional coaches on instructional strategies and activities that can be used in a variety of courses and content areas. At the high school level, Talent Development also works with schools to create schedules that allow students to engage in either prerequisite or advanced coursework based on their skill levels, while still guaranteeing that all students take a common core of college preparatory academics recommended by ACT (4 English, 3 Math, 3 Science, 3 Social Studies).

### *Middle School Curriculum and Instruction*

The existing middle school curriculum is often fragmented and repetitive. Diplomas Now Middle Grades program makes it possible for schools to engage all students in a standards-based curriculum in each of the major subject areas that is coherent, focused, and challenging. To make it possible for all students to succeed in this demanding core curriculum, teachers must update and upgrade their instructional strategies and content knowledge.

The professional development offered in each of the major subject areas combined with follow-up curriculum coaching and implementation support makes it possible for teachers to become skilled in instructional approaches that focus on teaching for understanding, peer assisted learning, explicit mechanisms for providing students with essential background knowledge, developing meta-cognitive strategies, and strategies and materials which engage students in an active way with questions that provoke higher order thinking. The Talent Development Middle Grades program provides the curriculum, professional development, coaching, implementation support, capacity building, and structural and organizational reforms needed to spread excellence in teaching to every class in every major subject at every grade level.

The curriculum and technical assistance provided by the program is designed to assist schools to successfully offer high-level classes to all students, provide all teachers with the support and professional development they need to develop deep content knowledge, and achieve good teaching that engages students as active and reflective learners in heterogeneous groups that are continually asked to apply their learning to problems of everyday life.

In addition, to prepare students for the challenging instructional texts they encounter in content areas, TDMG offers “All Hands on Deck,” professional development for teachers in all content areas to help them improve students’ literacy skills as applied to reading in content area learning. “All Hands on Deck” includes training in literacy strategies, a simulation that allows teachers to experience the infusion of literacy strategies into content-area instruction, and subject-specific breakouts for teachers to process and apply the principles to their particular areas of instruction.

Diplomas Now Middle Grades sites:

1. adopt a “no-excuses” credo: a belief that all students can succeed with a standards-based curriculum and that it is the collective responsibility of the adults and students in the school to overcome obstacles to this success
2. implement an evidence-based, standards-based instructional program in each major subject area
3. establish multiple tiers of support for teachers that provide them with sustained and focused professional development
4. provide extra help in reading and mathematics to struggling students during regular school hours
5. improve school climate and school-family-community partnerships
6. create communally-organized structures for caring that give teachers the opportunity to work with a smaller group of students over a longer period of time

The curriculum includes:

- **Student Team Literature**, an innovative, thoroughly tested, and highly effective cooperative learning approach to teaching and learning in Reading, English, and Language Arts (RELA).
- **A research- and standards-based mathematics curriculum** built around materials developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. The Talent Development Middle School Mathematics Program blends skill building with problem solving and is designed to enable all students to succeed in Algebra in eighth grade.
- **A hands-on inquiry-oriented science curriculum** linked to the national standards and benchmarks.
- **A U.S. history course** built around Joy Hakim’s award winning multicultural narrative *A History of US* series.
- **Extra help programs** in mathematics or reading for students who need it in order to succeed at the challenging learning tasks they face.

## Facilitated Instructional Programs

A team of curriculum coaches in math, reading/English language arts (RELA), science, and history is assigned to each school. Each curriculum coach assists the school in implementing curricular offerings in the subject area of his or her expertise to construct a coherent, standards-based instructional program. Each coach then provides high-quality monthly grade-specific professional development sessions to model upcoming activities from the curriculum, develop teachers’ content knowledge, demonstrate effective instructional approaches, and/or provide an opportunity for teachers to engage in collaborative reflective practice. The coaches also provide ongoing in-classroom assistance to teachers, including peer coaching, team teaching, trouble-shooting, and offering advice and encouragement.

### *Reading Program: Student Team Literature*

Perhaps the biggest challenge faced by middle schools is to help their students progress beyond elementary literacy skills and develop proficient reading, writing, communication, and language skills that enable them to learn, pursue postsecondary education, make informed career decisions, contribute to society, and advocate for themselves and others. Our curriculum meets this challenge by teaching

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effective reading strategies, extending comprehension skills, and developing fluency in reading and writing.

*Student Team Literature* (STL) is a systematic cooperative learning approach to increasing reading comprehension including vocabulary and literary analysis along with writing, critical thinking, and social skills (such as how to support the learning of others, resolve problems, and provide and use constructive feedback). The approach pairs Discussion Guides with high-quality, high-interest, culturally relevant trade books selected by the school's RELA faculty in consultation with the curriculum coach assigned to the school. Discussion guides are available for over 200 classic and contemporary works of adolescent literature, including fiction and nonfiction, biographies, plays, and collections of short stories and poems. Guides are available for literature of virtually any reading level, from books appropriate for special education students to those for middle school students with post-high school reading levels. The cycle is designed for optimal use during a daily 90-minute period but can be adjusted for shorter periods.

Integral to STL is the use of cooperative learning in teams of four that sometimes function as two partnerships. The teams are heterogeneously organized using two average, one low, and one high level reader. The cooperative segments of STL take advantage of young adolescents' social nature and focus it on academic work. However, since students do not naturally know how to work cooperatively, STL includes explicit instruction in the cooperative social skills. Lessons are provided both on basic skills (such as active listening and staying on task) and complex ones (such as clarifying ideas and negotiating). Explicit instruction in these skills is followed by teacher and student modeling and role-playing, use of the skills during STL team activities, and teacher monitoring and reinforcing of the skills during partner, team, and whole class activities.

### *Mathematics Program*

The Mathematics Program combines coherent research-based instructional materials from National Science Foundation-supported middle grades courses of study such as Everyday Math, Transition Math, Connected Mathematics, Mathematics in Context, Mathscape, and MathThematics with a multi-tiered teacher support system of sustained professional development and in-class coaching. Talent Development staff work with districts and schools to either support strong implementation of current curriculum, or if flexible, to adopt new curriculum.

### *Science Program*

Curricula supported by the TDMG program include the Full Option Science System (FOSS) and the Science Education for Public Understanding Program (SEPUP; both developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of CA at Berkeley); Science and Technology for Children (STC) developed by the National Science Resources Center (a joint project of the Smithsonian Institutions and the National Academy of Sciences); and Insights developed by the Education Development Center, Inc. These curricula use individual modules each addressing one topic under the categories of life science, earth and space science, physical science, or the nature of science. The benefit of the modular approach is

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that districts and schools can place modules in different grades to conform to the different state and local science standards that are being implemented. The modules are built around a set of hands-on activities that followed a logical progression to teach the topic. Their focus is not only on doing activities but also planning them and interpreting the results.

### *United States History*

The U.S. History instructional programs are built around Joy Hakim's award-winning book series for the middle grades, *A History of US* (Hakim, 1999). For each book in the ten-volume series, there are teaching guides that include lessons, student materials, and strategies and activities for interactive teaching and for facilitating student team learning. One goal is to fully develop young adolescents' ability to read history texts strategically and with understanding. Other goals include building sound historical reasoning and thinking skills and expository writing skills while having students systematically reflect on the some of the lessons for today that can be learned from studying the past.

### *Extra Help in Reading for Understanding and in Mathematics to Students During Regular School Hours*

Talent Development Middle Schools will establish two extra-help labs for students who need additional tailored instruction and practice in reading to learn or in mathematics. Each lab is offered as an elective course (with approximately half of the normal class size) for ten or twenty weeks to provide students a substantial "extra dose" of intensive and personalized instruction while they continue to attend all of their regular academic classes.

### *The Savvy Readers (SR) Lab*

The extra learning opportunities offered in the Savvy Readers Lab help struggling students become proficient at understanding what they read and at acquiring new learning from their reading so that they can begin experiencing more success across the standards-based curriculum in their school. The Lab seeks to liberate these students to become independent readers who assume responsibility for their own learning and who understand and enjoy higher-level books. The SR lab provides explicit instruction and practice in applying a wide variety of powerful reading strategies to various types of narrative and expository reading material.

The SR lab has four major components: (1) instruction in strategic reading, (2) practice of reading strategies, (3) rotation of learning centers and, (4) coaching and in-class support for the SR lab teacher.

*Explicit instruction in reading strategies.* At the beginning of each instructional period, students receive a mini-lesson covering a related set of reading strategies. The strategies help them construct meaning while they read (for example, by assisting them to decode unfamiliar words while reading, infer meanings of unfamiliar words, make predictions, monitor understanding while reading, repair comprehension when understanding slows down or stops, and identify and master important new vocabulary).

*Practice of reading strategies.* Each day, students practice applying the reading strategies that they are learning (sometimes using a class wide book and sometimes using an independent book chosen by the

student from the lab's library). Using strategy stickers, students make note of strategies they use as they read and then share their experiences with the class. Students also maintain journals to keep track of progress, respond to reading, and communicate with the teacher.

*Rotation of learning centers.* For 2 periods a week, students move to four learning centers where they continue to practice and develop reading and writing strategies independently and in small groups. Students rotate among a computer center (where they use software to improve reading and vocabulary skills), a listening and recording center (where they listen to books on tape or tape a portion of a book they are reading for the teacher to evaluate), an information resource center (where they engage in independent reading from a variety of books and magazines), and a writing center where students work on writing assignments from their other classes, and /or assignments specific to the SR lab.

### *Computer-and Team-Assisted Mathematics Acceleration (CATAMA) Lab*

The CATAMA lab is taught by a full time, certified, and experienced mathematics teacher who is viewed by his or her peers as skilled and effective and who is familiar with the NSF-supported math curriculum being taught at the school. The CATAMA teacher receives intensive initial training and regular follow up visits from one of TD's CATAMA facilitators who has previously taught the lab and who offer expert assistance and direction. Students usually attend the lab for just one grading period per year. The lab offers a way to accelerate the math learning of a large number of students because it can accommodate 5 classes a day of 16-20 students per class with new students taught each grading period. The goal with lower-performing students is to raise them to average math performance. The goal with higher-performing students is to provide enrichment that helps prepare them for selective high school programs.

CATAMA has several notable instructional features that are grounded in existing theoretical and empirical literature. It combines the instructional power and flexibility of a strong mathematics, the individualized extra-help capabilities of computer-based instruction, the motivating and cognitive aspects of peer-assisted learning, and the power of small group and individual tutoring.

### ***High School Curriculum and Instruction***

#### **Double Dose curriculum in Reading and Mathematics**

Diplomas Now high schools operates a "double dose" curriculum system for students who need additional support in reading and/or mathematics. TDHS provides teachers with a research-based, structured curriculum for reading and math double dose courses in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The purpose of these double dose courses is both to teach students necessary academic skills and strategies while increasing math and reading levels prior to core academic work. Students enrolled in double dose courses will focus on filling in conceptual and skills gaps prior to taking a required core academic course and engage in guided and independent practice that will build core academic skills. All students enrolled in a TDHS double dose course at the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, or 11<sup>th</sup> grade level will take all required academic course work such as English I and Algebra I with the same highly qualified content area teacher who taught the TDHS course.



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Prior to the start of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, all students will be required to take the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT) and the math portion of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). TDHS uses these test scores, along with secondary indicators such as EXPLORE, ITBS, and prior elementary assessments, to determine what level of support each individual student will need in math and reading. Students testing at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level or lower in math and/or reading and who have demonstrated academic skills gaps in elementary school, will be enrolled in TDHS double-dose courses in math and/or reading during the first semester of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. Students enrolled in double-dose courses will take the GMRT and/or CTBS again at the mid-point and end of the school year to gauge students' progress in math and/or reading and determine future supports. Students who demonstrate a skills gap of two years lag in math and/or reading at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year will be enrolled in TDHS double dose courses during the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, and will be tested again at both the mid-point and end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. Students who continue to demonstrate a skills gap of two years or more at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year will be enrolled in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade TDHS double dose courses during the first semester of their junior year. Teachers and administrators may also use secondary indicators such as PLAN, EXPLORE, and course-specific assessments to determine an individual student's need for double dosing.

Figure 1 demonstrates the decision making processes employed by CTDHS staff to make determinations regarding course placement for students.



Figure 1: Course placement decision making process for Mathematics and Reading

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The ninth grade double-dose curriculum features *Transition to Advanced Mathematics* and *Strategic Reading* courses. These first-semester courses prepare students for Algebra I and English I, respectively. The ninth grade curriculum also features a *Freshman Seminar* course in which students learn the importance of credits, effective social and study skills, keyboarding and basic computer literacy, and engage in college and career awareness activities.

The tenth-grade double-dose courses are *Reading and Writing in Your Career* and *Geometry Foundations*. The eleventh-grade double-dose courses are *College Prep Reading and Writing* and *Algebra II Foundations*. The English curriculum across all grades is further supported through *Student Team Literature* and *Talent Development Writing*, which provide curriculum materials and instructional processes to enhance student engagement and learning. The instructional practices implemented in the first semester double dose courses will continue to be utilized during instruction in the second semester standards-based core courses.

### *Strategic Reading*

Strategic Reading is an evidence-based intervention course designed to provide adolescents who are struggling with literacy with extra time to strengthen their reading and writing skills. Specifically targeted toward students who enter ninth grade without proper preparation in literacy, SR offers a non-traditional approach to accelerating students' ability to read fluently and comprehend well. This first semester, double-dose course helps English teachers narrow skill gaps so students can succeed in their second-semester core course. The design of the course and the reading selections (novels and non-fiction selections) address the interests and motivation of adolescents.

### *Reading and Writing in Your Career*

For 10<sup>th</sup>-graders whose reading levels are considerably lower than grade level, this course provides a double-dose of instructional time during the first semester to build and bolster the literacy skills needed to tackle the wide range of texts required in 10<sup>th</sup>-grade. Students interact daily with peers in discussion groups around thematically linked texts organized under unit titles, such as *Who Am I? Where Am I Going? How Will I Get There?* Teachers follow carefully designed, flexible instructional plans that enable students to converse, problem-solve, make decisions, share opinions and reach conclusions.

### *College Prep Reading and Writing*

This 11<sup>th</sup>-grade course moves the literacy initiative forward by providing additional and sustained support to students who have not acquired the necessary skills for college and post-high school careers. This course engages students in age-appropriate materials and topics while building confidence and skill levels. It also prepares students to meet the challenges of state assessments while enabling them to begin the necessary planning for post-secondary options.

### *Transition to Advanced Mathematics*

This ninth-grade, first-semester course, along with Algebra 1, offers students a year-long double-dose of mathematics instruction. It encourages students' conceptual understand of key mathematics ideas that underlie all high school mathematics and sharpens their overall basic mathematical skills. The course

challenges students to think through and understand what they are doing, learn from one another, communicate ideas and make connections between mathematics and the real world. Among the units are rational numbers, integers, measurement, patterns and functions, and introduction to algebra.

### *Geometry Foundations*

This 10<sup>th</sup>-grade course offers the double-dose strategy to geometry students. It reviews basic algebraic skills and fosters conceptual understanding of key mathematical ideas in high school geometry. It helps students learn missing mathematics components, develop new concepts, strengthen mathematics skills and reasoning, and broaden their understanding of geometry.

### *Algebra II Foundations*

This course is designed to help students build the “habits of mind” needed for success in Algebra II; it emphasizes the connections between numeric representation, graphic representation and algebraic notation. It fosters students’ conceptual understanding of key mathematics ideas that underlie advanced algebra and challenges students to think through and make sense of what they are doing. Among the key units are systems of equations, non-linear functions, probability, linear functions and one-variable equations.

### *Career Academy Blended Mathematics*

This is a series of exciting projects that supplement existing Talent Development, as well as general, curricula. These lessons present mathematics in an engaging manner while corresponding with state and district mathematics standards. The multi-class projects provide real-world applications embedded with career themes that equip student with the necessary critical thinking abilities to prosper beyond high school. The projects align with geometric, algebraic, and trigonometric topics found in every high school mathematics class.

### **Accelerating Literacy For All (ALFA) Lab**

As a component of the Talent Development Literacy Initiative, ALFA is an intensive triple-dose course designed for ninth-grade readers functioning 4 or more years below grade expectancy. The lab is facilitated by a teacher and a lab assistant with a maximum of twenty students per class. During the ALFA sessions, the ALFA teacher is primarily responsible for conducting the guided reading station while the lab assistant monitors and provides ongoing feedback to the remaining teams. The assistant also helps the teacher with maintaining and updating the assessment files. The ALFA Lab teacher assigns each student to a team of peers with similar strengths and weaknesses in reading. Each team rotates through all the components within a 90 minute block. The ALFA Lab components are as follows:

#### *Main Station*

The students are involved in guided reading sessions with the teacher explicitly modeling reading strategies and supporting students’ comprehension and reasoning with vocabulary. The ALFA teacher facilitates active engagement by guiding students through reading and returning to text and by providing immediate feedback to the students.

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## *Wordology*

This station provides multiple opportunities for the students to work with vocabulary previously encountered. Students use learning tools to apply word knowledge in the context of word meaning and word structure.

## *Comprehension Connection*

Students are given additional opportunities to read, organize text details and construct responses to text-based questions.

## *Media Madness*

This learning station provides regular opportunities for students to utilize computers for inquiry and for completing specific performance tasks. Students are required to view, listen, read and write. A listening station is established so students can have regular exposure to vocabulary in meaningful context by listening and following along with reading selections on tape.

The overall purpose for the ALFA Lab is to improve reading achievement and increase the independence of struggling adolescents to a degree that they can successfully meet the literacy requirements of high school courses. The primary targets for ALFA provide a foundation upon which the course components were established and the various activities developed. Each component is described by specific indicators:

## *Reading Strategies*

- explicit strategy instruction with teacher modeling to promote strategy use independently and flexibly

## *Comprehension*

- direct reading instruction emphasizing text-based comprehension skills
- activities that require examination of vocabulary in the context of reading

## *Vocabulary*

- explicit instruction that connects vocabulary to meanings, e.g., pre-teaching vocabulary prior to reading a selection
- independent and collaborative activities designed to reinforce students' word knowledge and understanding of word structure
- ongoing exposure to activities that incorporate vocabulary encountered in core text
- regular practice with fluent processing of high frequency words and high school level content vocabulary (word recognition).

## *Writing*

- constructing written responses to open-ended questions relating to the text
- responding to writing prompts that require students to write for a variety of purposes
- following the writing process to complete specific tasks
- using the computer to compose writing samples

## *Fluency*

- exercises that reinforce word recognition and automaticity
- exercises with high frequency words
- ongoing assessment of word accuracy during timed readings

## *Technology*

- using technology for researching information
- using technology as a learning tool that enhances application of knowledge and reinforces skills previously encountered.

## **College Readiness and Transition**

Diplomas Now begins to both prepare students for college and support them in selecting the right post-secondary pathway from the first days of high school. In Freshman Seminar, all students begin to explore their strengths and interests and use this information to research career fields and relevant post-secondary pathways. This phase of research is accompanied by college exposure activities that include career and college fairs, mock interviews, and visits to college campuses. After this research, students begin to develop a plan that helps them select a Career Pathway as well as some specific courses relevant to their aspirations and interests in grades 10-12.

Throughout the sophomore and junior year, students receive academic support that prepares them to be successful post-secondary students. These supports include:

- enrolling all students in a college preparatory course of study for academic content areas
- providing “double dose” accelerated elective courses for students who need additional support to be prepared for college prep academic classes
- offering career elective classes that challenge students to apply academic skills in workplace settings and develop new skill sets that will benefit them after high school.

This support in the classroom is coupled with ongoing college exposure and research activities. These activities might include additional college visits, meeting with representatives from various career and college fields, and engaging in off-site career exploration activities such as job shadows and internships where professional can discuss their own college and career experiences with students. During the sophomore and junior years, Career Academies also provide information and events for families to learn more about the college research, selection, and admissions process.

During the final year of high school, many TDHS schools offer the Senior Seminar course. This course provides an opportunity for students to learn and practice research, writing, and study skills necessary for success at the post-secondary level; learn more about time management and social skills demonstrated by effective post-secondary students; and continue to prepare for application, admission, and transition into the post-secondary environment. TDHS schools pair this support for students with ongoing support for families regarding college admissions, with a particular emphasis on the financial aid process.

City Year corps members provide capacity to utilize early warning data systems to identify off-track students and intervene as soon as these students exhibit warning signs (attendance, behavior, course performance)

City Year corps members use small and large group facilitation techniques that allow them to lead small group learning sessions with students, enabling teachers to provide differentiated instruction which research shows is a transformational accelerator of student of progress. Corps members provide the necessary people power to work with hundreds of students in need of extra support

***C. Integrate all programs that have an impact on instruction:***

- ***Identify all state, district, and school-level instructional and professional development programs;***
- ***Determine whether each program will be eliminated or integrated with the intervention model; and***
- ***Ensure all remaining and new programs directly align with the objectives and structure of the intervention model.***

During the school's planning process, a Curriculum and Instruction Committee consisting of instructional staff and leadership from the school will work with Diplomas Now to engage in a review of all existing and proposed instructional reforms and professional development activities within the school. By analyzing school data at the school and student level, evaluating the proposed outcomes of each instructional and professional development program, and exploring the resources required to implement each program, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee will recommend a new instructional and professional development plan to the school's principal. This plan will outline each individual program's alignment to the school's goals and recommend whether the school should eliminate, consolidate, or continue each program after implementation of the Talent Development model commences. Once the Principal and the committee reach consensus on the plan, it will be enacted upon implementation of the Diplomas Now school turnaround model.

**4. Extending learning time.**

***A. Provide more time for students to learn core academic content by:***

- ***expanding the school day, the school week, or the school year;***
- ***increasing instructional time for core academic subjects during the school day; and***
- ***allocating a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills.***

*School Year and School Day*

The Diplomas Now model is structured to run on a traditional school calendar of at least 170 instructional days. Each instructional day must include a minimum of 360 minutes of instructional time.

*Summer Bridge Programs*

In addition to the traditional school day, the Diplomas Now model works with many partner schools to develop summer bridge opportunities and extended day learning opportunities during the school year.

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Good Beginnings is a summer bridge program utilized by Baltimore Talent Development and Chicago Talent Development High Schools. Good Beginnings is a summer learning experience for rising 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, designed to prepare them for successful transition from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade into their first year of high school. This experience will offer awareness, orientation, experiences and instruction in such areas as:

- teamwork and collaboration
- independent decision-making
- creative thinking
- character building
- goal setting (long- and short-term)
- career exploration
- exposure to academics
- a profile of offerings specific to their high school
- inter-relationships with peers and school staff
- community awareness through field trips and outreach activities
- critical thinking
- problem solving
- leadership development
- skill building
- personal growth and self-esteem

### *Extended Periods*

Both the TDMG and TDHS model utilize extended periods in order to increase the amount of instructional time in core academic subjects. These extended periods allow schools to increase the amount of time students spend learning core academic subjects. Extended periods also provide teachers with the necessary time to engage in engaging and innovative instructional strategies that differentiate instruction across the learning spectrum, and afford students the time and flexibility within the classroom to engage in guided and independent practice that builds their core skills.

The TDMG instructional model utilizes extended periods for instruction in 75 to 90 minute class periods. The TDHS model implements a 4x4 block schedule. In the 4x4 block schedule, students enroll in four 90-minute courses for one semester. These courses meet every day of the week during the semester. During the second semester, students enroll in four new 90-minute courses. This approach to scheduling allows high schools to offer 8 courses per school year versus only 7 courses per year on a traditional high school schedule. Over the course of the four-year program of study, this means that a TDHS student has the opportunity to earn 32 credits as opposed to 28 on a traditional schedule.

These extra credits can be used to provide courses that provide additional instruction in math and/or language arts without asking students to sacrifice space in their schedules to be used for career or interest-based electives. Additionally, the block schedule allows schools to provide intensive support to

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students during the critical 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. This intensive focus on accelerating student learning in math and reading allows struggling students to “catch up” to their peers, and even engage in advanced core classes or electives during the last two years of high school. This acceleration occurs in large part due to the innovative instructional practices teachers can implement in the 90-minute period. During the extended period, teachers have time to model skills for students, engage students through cooperative learning activities, offer authentic assessments through project-based learning, and create individual learning centers within their classes that allow students to focus on the specific skills and content they need to master in order to succeed in a course.

In addition to the academic benefits of the 4x4 block schedule, this scheduling model also improves school culture and climate in several ways. First, it supports the development of strong teacher-student relationships by reducing the number of students a teacher works with on a daily basis. Most other scheduling models have a teacher work with 5 or 6 sections of students at any given time. The 4x4 block schedule, however, only assigns teachers 3 sections of students each semester. If a school has an average class size of 25 students per section, each teacher works with 50 fewer students, giving the teacher more time and opportunities to get to know students and communicate with their families. Additionally, the block schedule cuts down on the amount of time students travel from class to class and increases the amount of time focused on teaching and learning.

City Year corps members reinforce classroom learning by providing full-time presence and continuity throughout the student’s day from in-school to after school/extended learning. The in-school relationships that corps members develop with students result in higher attendance in out-of-school school activities. Corps members also connect critical in-school learning into the afterschool space by ensuring students receive extra help, complete their homework and receive reinforcing enrichment activities to keep them engaged and on-track. Students who have attended City Year Afterschool report significantly higher feelings of being capable learners in the classroom and rated their feelings of connection to school higher than their non-afterschool attending peers.

### ***B. Provide more time for teachers to collaborate.***

Common planning time is one the most critical components of the Diplomas Now approach to improving student outcomes and building the collective capacity of a school’s staff. In order for the teacher teams that form the basis of the Diplomas Now organizational models to reach their full potential to help students succeed, they must have a fixed time during their professional day to engage in collective data analysis and decision-making, engage in professional learning, and plan and prepare student activities. Diplomas Now helps schools implement common planning time within teacher team schedules, and provides technical assistance and capacity building activities designed to prepare teachers to engage in focused work targeting improved student outcomes.

Diplomas Now builds common planning time into the teacher teams’ schedule by having all students from a teacher team attend elective courses taught by teaching staff not assigned to that team during the same period of the day. For example, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students on the same teacher team might attend Health or Keyboarding so that their math, language arts, and social studies teachers can meet during



common planning time. Diplomas Now teacher teams meet multiple times per week, and each meeting has a specific focus. Teachers focus on the following topics during common planning time:

- Analyzing student data such as Early Warning Indicators and achievement data
- Developing individual student intervention plans based on student data
- Planning for team-wide incentives, celebrations, or interventions to promote a positive school and team culture and identity
- Looking at student work, sharing best practices, and engaging in other interdisciplinary professional development activities
- Meeting with parents and engaging in outreach and communication with other critical stakeholders

The Diplomas Now organizational facilitator provides team leaders and teaching staff with professional development, teaming resources, and engages in modeling and team building activities with teams that focuses on increasing their internal capacity to engage in high-intensity work as a teacher team with minimal technical assistance after the first several years of implementation.

### ***C. Provide more time for enrichment activities for students.***

One option for providing additional enrichment activities for students in Talent Development schools is an extra period of 45 minutes, devoted to Arts and Expression (A&E) courses three days a week with advisory sessions the other two days. For A&E, professional artists – musicians, dancers, photographers, potters – from the community teach students in eight-week electives. There are three A&E sessions throughout the year; productions cap each session with parents and the public invited to see and appreciate the students' accomplishments.

The A&E period offers students an opportunity to choose a course that fits their interests, a chance to perform or exhibit their work, and contact with other caring adults. It also gives students another reason to come to school.

In addition to A&E periods, students in grades 10-12 utilize the block schedule to engage in career elective courses and enrichment electives that expose them to skills, knowledge, and activities that extend beyond the core academic curriculum. The typical student in a school using a TDHS model will take a minimum of 6 career and enrichment electives in grades 10-12.

**5. Providing operating flexibility. Give the school sufficient operating flexibility to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes. In particular, the school-level leader must have:**

***A. Authority to select and assign staff to the school;***

***B. Authority to control school calendar and scheduling; and***

***C. Control over financial resources necessary to implement the intervention model.***

The Talent Development model relies on structures that promote distributed leadership, the use of data to drive decision-making at the classroom, team, and school level, and school-level autonomy around

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critical policy and resource decisions that impact the school's ability to implement the Talent Development organizational and instructional model.

In order to ensure these conditions, Talent Development engages in several strategies during the needs assessment, planning, and implementation phases of the partnership to ensure operating flexibility. First, during the final phases of the awareness process, the school district, school, and Talent Development develop a program partnership agreement (PPA) that outlines the responsibilities and operating conditions for each of the partners. This document will contain language that ensure that the principal, with the advisement of Talent Development and the school's leadership team, will have autonomy over staff selection and assignment, resource allocation, staff and student scheduling, the professional development calendar, and other critical areas of decision-making necessary for successful implementation.

***Provide a detailed description of sub-contractors. Provide evidence that the lead has vetted the partners, obtained reasonable assurances of their efficacy, and only targeted program elements that further the objectives of the intervention plan***

Diplomas Now harnesses the talents and assets of multiple organizations - Talent Development, City Year and Communities In Schools - that, *together with the school*, create a comprehensive, interwoven array of student interventions at the whole-school/classroom, targeted and intensive levels. Along Diplomas Now combines the deep experience of Communities In Schools in providing community-based integrated student supports with the capacity and know-how of City Year to provide the necessary person power to carry out targeted interventions at the needed scale.

Each partner has specific responsibilities that it undertakes to support this model. The three main organizations replicating this work across the country bring decades of experience working with high-need communities and schools and expertise in a variety of fields, while school partners have the expertise and deep community ties necessary for the initiative to succeed. This combined effort enables the development of a comprehensive support system and the provision of a range of specialized targeted and intensive supports required in each school community.

**Communities In Schools** will provide an experienced site coordinator for each building, supported by both CIS Detroit and the national organization. Putting into practice the community-based integrated student supports (CBISS) model, the site coordinator will work together to assess the range, scale, and scope of the specialized intensive supports needed by students, as identified by the Early Warning Tracking System. Following the needs assessment, CIS will bring in and monitor the organizations and individuals required to provide the identified supports. The CIS site coordinator would also organize whole school interventions, such as health screenings, career and college fairs, and motivational events. In addition, CIS would make social service referrals, complete home visits, coordinate small group and individualized counseling sessions and develop peer support groups, as indicated by the early warning tracking system.

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**City Year** will place a team of 8-10 highly trained corps members (young adults up to 24 years old) in each school from before school opens through the end of the after school program four days per week for the entire year. Before entering the school, these corps members will have received one month of training in relevant subject areas such as tutoring techniques and behavioral management. The power of these teams of “near peers” who build strong relationships with students in a high poverty middle grades school is quickly multiplied, as corps members provide attendance monitoring, tutoring/mentoring and homework support well over one hundred students and collectively enable schools to offer after-school and community service opportunities. Additionally, corps members connect with students and ensure those most in need of extra support receive both in- and after-school assistance. City Year’s full day presence allows corps members to connect in school to extended day/after-school work and activities to reinforce student learning. City Year teams provide assistance to teachers with the nuts and bolts of managing the data flow needed to operate and use an early warning system, and operate school-wide school climate and attendance programs. The City Year teams will be led by an experienced team leader who will be well-trained in our new school design.

### Major Roles and Responsibilities of Diplomas Now Partners (chart continues on following page)

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Partner	Core Function	Means and Methods	Additional Roles	Means and Methods
<b>Talent Development</b>	Whole school	<p>Research-based instructional, organizational and teacher support reforms</p> <p>Proven blueprint customized for each school</p> <p>On-site and regional implementation support</p>	<p>Extra academic supports</p> <p>Extra behavior supports</p> <p>Implement Early Warning Data System</p>	<p>Elective replacement extra help courses</p> <p>Facilitate and enable teacher teams working with a manageable numbers of students</p>

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<b>City Year</b>	Targeted supports	<p>8-10 full time, full day trained corps members</p> <p>Whole school, whole child (WSWC) program</p> <p>Support from local and national organization</p>	<p>Support positive school climate and attendance programs</p> <p>Community service projects</p> <p>After school programs</p>	<p>Diverse team of near peers</p> <p>Provide critical student and teacher support</p> <p>Young Heroes program</p> <p>WSWC program</p>
<b>Communities In Schools</b>	Intensive supports	<p>Research-based integrated student support service strategy</p> <p>Delivered through a trained site coordinator</p> <p>Research based needs assessment</p> <p>National and Local Affiliate training/ technical assistance support</p>	<p>Episodic whole School Supports</p> <p>Research-based prevention programming</p>	<p>Health Screening</p> <p>Parental involvement/family strengthening</p> <p>Career Day etc.</p>

### **4. Building Capacity for Sustained Improvement**

Diplomas Now understands the importance of building school systems and structures that allow for sustained implementation and improvement that do not rely on external technical assistance once fully implemented. To achieve this goal, Diplomas Now focuses on several strategies to build internal capacity within a school and district. First, Diplomas Now commitment to intensive, ongoing communication and dialogue among all stakeholders involved in school improvement, including school and district leadership, staff members, students and families, community members, and school board members and other elected officials, creates a shared sense of purpose for improvement at the school, so that the school community takes ownership of its improvement plan rather than seeing it as an external one imposed by Diplomas Now or ISBE.

In addition, Diplomas Now focus on distributed leadership and intensive professional development during the first two years of implementation builds the capacity of these distributed leadership systems to engage in shared decision-making and collective action. The Diplomas Now organizational facilitator helps the school to:

- establish a leadership team that distributes leadership through the creation of the Academy Principal position
- select and train teachers to serve as team leaders
- create master schedules that support the development of small learning communities, the equitable distribution of staff and students, and the implementation of common planning time
- model and facilitate shared decision-making frameworks and protocols for teacher teams to use during common planning time
- build a transparent system of data collection, reporting, and analysis that promotes shared ownership of outcomes and student-centered, data-based decision-making

After several years of implementation and refinement of the structures and approaches, the professional culture of a school internalizes these approaches and can sustain the implementation of these components of the Diplomas Now model without external technical assistance.

In addition to focusing on creating a system of distributed leadership, Talent Development also focuses during the first several years of the partnership on developing a school's internal capacity to successfully implement the Talent Development curriculum and instructional strategies. First, Talent Development invests significant time and energy in developing the expertise of local instructional coaches who can support staff members and take on the responsibility of training future staff members to successfully implement the Talent Development instructional components. Additionally, these instructional coaches build the capacity of teachers to serve as peer resources through peer observations, demonstration lessons, and reflective dialogue. Developing multiple experts on the Talent Development instructional components eliminates the need for intensive external technical assistance and allows a school to continue its instructional program even as new members join the staff.

## Community In Schools:

- During the implementation of the plan outlined in the proposal, the school will integrate practices and develop partnerships that will focus on addressing student needs. Communities In Schools will assign a social worker to each school to:
  - Facilitate/collaborate with the school leadership team in identifying and addressing school and student social, emotional, and health needs;
  - Build school capacity to manage community partnerships;
  - Coordinate school-wide prevention programs and services provided by community partners; and
  - Provide targeted and sustained intervention services to students.
- At the end of the grant period, the school will be assigned (as part of a portfolio of schools) to a Communities In Schools coordinator. The school principal will designate a staff person(s) who will be provided:
  - Technical support to continue to assess and address the needs of the school; and
  - Referrals to community partners able to address school and student priorities through widely accessible prevention programs.

## 5. Outcomes-Based Measurement Plan

Diplomas Now will use a variety of metrics to determine if the school is meeting short, mid-range, and long-term metrics that align with the model's mission and education plan. Short-term metrics will be available for analysis during the first year of implementation, and include average daily attendance, % of student on-track for promotion and graduation, and reductions in negative behavior incidents in the school. Mid-range indicators will be available for analysis during years 2 and 3 of implementation, and include improvements on achievement test scores, changes in course taking patterns, and exposure to career exploration activities. Long-term indicators will be available after the fourth year of implementation, and include graduation rates and percentage of graduates enrolled in post-secondary education and/or career pathways. The following table outlines these metrics and benchmarks. The first percentage indicated under each year of the grant is the realistic benchmark, while the second percentage listed is the aggressive benchmark. (**Note:** Table continues over two pages.)

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Indicator	Availability	FY 10 (Planning Year)	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
Average Daily Attendance	Short-Term	Baseline	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%
% of freshman on track to graduate	Short-Term	Baseline	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%
% of students promoted to next grade	Short-Term	Baseline	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%
% of students passing all courses	Short-Term	Baseline	85%/90%	85%/90%	85%/90%	85%/90%
% of students performing below grade level in math and/or reading demonstrating 1.5 years or more growth on standardized assessments (GMRT/CTBS)	Short-Term	Baseline	75%/90%	75%/90%	75%/90%	75%/90%
% decrease in students with off-track behaviors (office referrals or similar tracking data)	Short-Term	Baseline	66%/75%	66%/75%	66%/75%	66%/75%
% of students reporting a safe school environment on TDHS climate survey	Short-Term	Baseline	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%
% of students reporting strong, positive relationships with teachers and other adults on TDHS climate survey	Short-Term	Baseline	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%	90%/95%
% of students performing below grade level demonstrating composite score increases of 2 points or more on EPAS tests (Fall to Fall)	Mid-Term	Baseline	66%/75%	66%/75%	66%/75%	66%/75%

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% Meeting or Exceeding State Standards on all sections of the ISAT/PSAE (whole school and all subgroups)	Mid-Term	Baseline	n/a	85%/85% (ISAT Only)	92.5%/92.5%	100%/100%
% of students participating in at least one off-site career activity (shadowing, mentoring, internship, etc.)	Mid-Term	Baseline	n/a	20%/33%	66%/75%	100%/100%
% of students enrolled in AP, or advanced level coursework	Mid-Term	Baseline	n/a	n/a	33%/40%	50%/60%
Graduation Rate	Long-Term	Baseline	n/a	n/a	90%/95%	90%/95%
% of graduates enrolled in post-secondary education or career training	Long-Term	Baseline	n/a	n/a	50%/75%	75%/90%

In order to ensure that teacher teams implement short-term student interventions in a timely manner, teacher teams review student-level attendance data for their team on a weekly basis, and use quarterly interim progress reports every five weeks to look for students struggling with attendance or academic issues. Regular disciplinary action reports also allow teacher teams to design behavior interventions for students who frequently disrupt the instructional process. The Diplomas Now organizational facilitators provide training and ongoing job-embedded support during team meetings to build the capacity of local stakeholders to compile, organize, and analyze data on short-term student outcome indicators as part of the Early Warning Indicator (EWI) system. This EWI data is used to make decisions regarding interventions for individual students, while trend analysis of the aggregate data at the team and school level provides information for decisions impacting professional development and support, scheduling and staff assignments, and strategic planning for sustained improvement.

Diplomas Now employs several assessments to determine students' academic progress in partner schools. Students in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade take the EXPLORE and PLAN tests during the first six weeks of the school year. These assessments, designed by ACT Inc., provide critical information regarding ACT and PSAE readiness, provide teachers with item analysis information that allows them to target specific skill deficiencies in core academic areas, and gauge progress on ACT readiness from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade year.

In addition to the PLAN and EXPLORE assessments, all incoming students take the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT) and mathematics section of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS).



Teachers use these tests, along with elementary school records, to identify students performing below grade level. These students are enrolled in double dose reading and/or math courses and take follow-up GMRT and CTBS assessments at the mid-point and end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. These tests are used to determine increases in academic skills during the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year as well as identify students still performing below grade level at the end of their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. TDHS also utilizes the assessment process outlined above for students performing below grade level in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

In addition to the professional development provided to instructional staff, Diplomas Now will also work with school and district staff members to develop a system for compiling, documenting, and reporting student outcomes and other data critical to implementation of the Diplomas Now program. This technical assistance will include a review of existing student information systems, development of supplementary data collection systems, and professional development around data collection and analysis for school and district leadership, IT staff, and other stakeholders charged with supporting the data system.

Administrators, academy and team leaders, and other members of the school leadership team will work with Diplomas Now facilitators to conduct a quarterly data review. These quarterly data reviews will examine all available data related to the metrics indicated above, as well as additional formative and summative data regarding implementation of the Diplomas Now program. These data reviews will drive adjustments to the instructional, climate, and professional development plans at each site, and to adjust school improvement goals and the strategies used to meet these goals. Data will also be shared with each of the teacher teams in order to design interventions for individual students struggling with academics, attendance, or behavior. All teachers will receive professional development in order to better understand how to analyze student- and school- level data and how to design student interventions based on student-level data.

## **6. Nonoperational Support Functions**

Diplomas Now does not plan to provide nonoperational support functions to partnering schools.

## **7. Fiscal Status Reporting**

***Describe the plan for how the applicant will report on the fiscal status of the implementation to ISBE and the school district.***

Diplomas Now will develop a program participation agreement (PPA) for each year of the partnership. This PPA will outline a scope of program implementation and related budget. Based on this approved budget, Diplomas Now will provide quarterly reports on fiscal status based on the budgets set forth in this application and the PPAs developed with each partner school and district.

## **5. Demonstrated Record of Effectiveness** (only from lead partner)

### ***a. Track record of strategies proposed, their research basis, and how they assist school improvement efforts***

Talent Development Middle Grades and High Schools programs are comprehensive research-based reform models with track records of transforming low-performing schools. These transformations create learning communities that hold all students to high standards while giving them the help they need to reach these standards. The programs' comprehensive approaches remove many of the obstacles that keep vulnerable young people from realizing their highest academic and human potential. With results validated by rigorous independent evaluations, Talent Development is widely acknowledged as one of the few turn-around models that creates demonstrable results in low-performing schools.

Talent Development's research-based strategies include:

#### **A. Organizational reforms**

The Talent Development model organizes schools, staff and instructional time to provide a safe, supportive and academically focused environment. Such an environment provides the climate for school improvement. These organizational innovations include: small learning communities, specifically a ninth grade transition academy for all freshmen, and career academies for upper grade students; teacher and student teams that foster personal relationships; common planning time for teams of teachers; extended class periods, typically organized around a 4x4 block schedule, to provide students with more uninterrupted instructional time and fewer distractions caused by frequent change of classes, and extracurricular activities that enable students to pursue their talents and interests and connect with adults from the community who have skills and wisdom to share.

A significant body of research exists on the effects of organization (of time, space and staff) on school effectiveness. Studies support each of these strategies as effective ways to raise the quality of relationships in schools and keep students engaged and advancing in school. One study of small learning communities in New Mexico, for example, found statistically significant improvements in school climate, student retention, attendance, and grade completion. Also, students were more likely to report that they felt visible, safe, engaged and held to higher academic standards than students in traditional, large high schools (Heath, 2005). Recent qualitative research indicates that in schools where there is interdisciplinary teaching or where students are exposed to interdisciplinary teaching, students perceive themselves as growing in academic confidence, tolerance, and independence as a result of this practice (Boyer & Bishop, 2004). See The High School Reform Strategy Toolkit ([www.highschooltoolkit.com](http://www.highschooltoolkit.com)) for additional studies that make up the research base for these reform strategies.

#### **B. Curriculum and instruction**

Talent Development schools expect all students to succeed in a common core college preparatory curriculum. Numerous studies support the adoption of a core curriculum to improve performance and attainment, and to reduce achievement gaps (Lee and Burkham, 2003; Somerville and Li, 2002). Talent

Development also recognizes that many students in traditionally low-performing schools and high-poverty communities will need extra help to succeed in a high standards curriculum and that teachers will need tools and support as well. TD provides curricula and activities specifically designed to close skill gaps, promote active learning, develop mature thinking and improve achievement so that all students can meet the high expectations of a standards-based curriculum. Talent Development uses a blend of its own courses, district requirements and highly regarded curricula from other sources, such as *Everyday Mathematics* and *A History of US*. The Talent Development curriculum, with double and triple doses of content in core subjects, meets students where they are and takes them where they need to go so that they can graduate high school and succeed in college, career and beyond. Studies indicate this approach results in significant academic growth for students in TD schools compared with similar students in schools that are not implementing the TD approach (Balfanz, Legters, Jordan, 2004; Herlihy & Quint, 2006; Balfanz, & Byrnes, 2006; Maclver, Ruby, Balfanz & Byrnes, 2003)

### **C. Professional development and coaching**

Extensive, on-going professional development for principals, leadership teams and faculty is a hallmark of Talent Development, which aims to establish a professional learning community in each school. For high schools, a four-person implementation support team made up of an organizational facilitator, and instructional facilitators in mathematics, English Language Arts and Freshman Seminar/teaming works with the school throughout a planning period to ensure reforms are in place and adults are trained to achieve a strong implementation from the outset. The team continues to service the school, providing follow-up training for Talent Development courses, as well as in-class support, data analysis and customized training and workshops.

Professional development for the Talent Development Middle Grades program typically begins in the summer months prior to the first year of implementation. Instructional staff attends a two- to three-day workshop initiating them in the workings of the TDMG model. Subject-specific professional development in the use of TDMG curricula is also provided to content area teachers. During the school year, TDMG content-area facilitators visit schools each month to provide ongoing professional development in the implementation of the TDMG instructional program.

Schools are further supported by on-site, subject-area coaches, who work with faculty peers in a non-evaluative manner to improve instruction and provide differentiated academic supports. All TD schools also benefit from participation in a nationwide network of schools adopting similar reforms. Network activities include regional trainings, conferences, and on-line sharing of best practices. The TD approach to developing professional learning communities, providing sustained, on-site technical assistance and job-embedded coaching supports, and including partner schools in a broader learning network through the activities of the Everyone Graduates Center are all in-line with research-based best practices in school reform and professional development (Davis and McPartland; Smith and Gillespie, 2007; Sparks and Hirsh, 1997; Stringfield and Datnow, 1998).

## D. Early Warning Indicators and Targeted Interventions

A high percentage of dropouts send distress signals in the middle grades, long before they actually drop out. Recent studies have shown that by looking at key indicators, teachers and administrators can identify as early as sixth grade the students most likely to drop out during high school. There are four key indicators: a final grade of F in mathematics, a final grade of F in English; attendance below 80 percent for the year, and a final “unsatisfactory” behavior grade in even one class. Students who exhibit even one of these behaviors have a 75 percent chance of dropping out. Talent Development is using these early warning indicators to identify students at risk of falling off the graduation path and instituting a program of tiered interventions to deliver the right support to the right students at the right time. In addition to academic support, such as tutoring and extra-help classes, the interventions include school wide attendance programs and social service assistance for the 5 to 10 percent of students who need the most intensive interventions. This approach to keeping students in school positively affects a school or district’s record of improvement – as it not only prevents dropouts, but also promotes the success of those who stay in school, preparing students for higher education, careers and productive lives.

*Putting Middle Grades Students on the Graduation Path: A Policy and Practice Brief* (Balfanz, 2009) is based on more than a decade of research and development work at Johns Hopkins University, as well as direct field experience in more than 30 middle schools implementing comprehensive reform and a long-standing collaboration with the Philadelphia Education Fund and several middle schools that serve high-poverty populations in Philadelphia. The research and fieldwork illuminate key policy and practice implications of the role the middle grades play in achieving our national goal of graduating all students from high school prepared for college, career, and civic life.

At Feltonville Arts and Sciences Middle School in Philadelphia, the Early Warning Indicators were tracked during the 2008-09 school year and appropriate interventions were used with students who showed off-track indicators. The results are dramatic:

- From June 2008-June 2009: Students with less than 80 percent attendance were reduced by 52 percent; students with three or more negative behavior marks reduced by 45 percent; students failing English reduced by 80 percent, and students failing mathematics reduced by 83 percent. These indicators are the basis for a new turn-around model, Diplomas Now, being implemented in Chicago, San Antonio, New Orleans and Los Angeles, as well as continuing in Philadelphia.

## Independent Evaluations of Talent Development

**What Works Clearinghouse:** Talent Development High Schools is rated as an effective research-based plan for reducing dropouts by the What Works Clearinghouse, the information arm of the U. S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences. The clearinghouse recognizes only programs that are shown to be effective according to its strict standards of research. [www.whatworks.ed.gov](http://www.whatworks.ed.gov).

**The American Youth Policy Forum** identified Talent Development High Schools in 2009 as one of 23 programs that support youth on the path to college and beyond in *Success at Every Step: How 23*

*Programs Support Youth on the Path to College and Beyond.* This publication identifies programs that have been proven to help young people successfully complete high school and be prepared for success in postsecondary education and careers, based on the results of recent, high-quality evaluations.

**MDRC Reports:** In *Making Progress Toward Graduation*, MDRC (an independent social research firm) reports findings from a rigorous study that compares schools implementing Talent Development reforms with similar high schools. The longitudinal study finds that Talent Development produced substantial and pervasive educational gains for students in low-performing schools in Philadelphia. Talent Development increased school attendance by nine days per year for each student, and increased students' passing rates in Algebra I an average of 25 percentage points. For a high school with 500 first-time ninth-graders, the program helped an additional 125 students pass algebra and an extra 40 students get promoted to tenth grade. Findings also indicate that positive effects extended to eleventh-grade math test scores and to graduation rates (Kemple, Herlihy, and Smith, 2005).

In *The Talent Development Middle School Model* and a follow-up publication with later findings, MDRC looked at the middle grades program, focusing on eighth grade, which marks the culmination of students' middle school experiences. The following is an overview of the key findings of the 2004 and 2005 reports:

- Talent Development had a positive impact on math achievement for eighth-graders, a finding that emerged in the third year of implementation and then strengthened during the next two years in the schools for which data are available.
- Talent Development schools exhibited modest impacts on eighth-grade attendance rates.
- The model produced an inconsistent pattern of impacts on eighth-grade reading achievement: Modest improvements occurred in some years but not in others.

### ***b. Specific examples of academic improvement in underperforming schools***

#### **David Starr Jordan High School, Los Angeles**

David Starr Jordan High School in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles moved into "corrective action" in 2004-05 because of its falling Academic Performance Index (API) on state measures and its high number of suspensions. With 1,800 students, Jordan has a largely Hispanic student body, with 81 percent eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

With the help of a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Jordan became a Talent Development High School in 2005-06. Among the reforms Jordan instituted in fall 2006 were a ninth-grade academy, a 4x4 block schedule and double-doses of English and mathematics for ninth- and tenth-grade students who were not working at grade level. As a result of these and other changes, Jordan has seen great progress. The school gained 43 points on the California API (an index based largely on improvements in test scores), increasing from 483 in 2006 to 526 in 2007 and far exceeding its own growth target of 16 points.

More than 87 percent of ninth-graders passed English, more than 84 percent passed Algebra I and more than 80 percent had enough credits to be promoted to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. These rates stand out among low-

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performing high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, where barely 50 percent of the students are reported to pass Algebra I. At the same time, suspensions at Jordan dropped from 742 in 2004-05 to 327 in 2006-07 and 304 in 2007-08. Average daily attendance rose from nearly 85 percent to 90 percent over the same period.

### **Baltimore Talent Development High School:**

Baltimore Talent Development High School (BTDHS) is a public, non-selective school in one of Baltimore's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. It opened in 2004 with about 100 ninth-graders, and added a grade a year. In the 2008-2009 school year BTDHS enrolled 507 students in grades 9-12. Ninety-eight percent of the student body is African-American, with 76 percent eligible for free or reduced price lunch and 12.5 percent qualifying for special education services.

In 2008 BTDHS had its first graduating class with a remarkable graduation rate of more than 88 percent, significantly above the Baltimore City average of 63 percent and the Maryland average of 85 percent. The Class of 2009 had an almost identical graduation rate, again well above both the city and state averages. The dropout rate was close to 5 percent, below the city average of 6.2 percent, but above the state average of 2.8 percent.

BTDHS students pass the Maryland State High School Assessments (HSA) at higher rates than students in an average Baltimore high school. Since 2006, the school's English proficiency levels have increased remarkably. The percentage of students scoring in the advanced range increased from 1.8 percent in 2006 to 33 percent in 2009; the percentage of students scoring in the proficient range increased from 26.1 percent in 2006 to 50.5 percent in 2009, and the percentage of students scoring at the basic level decreased from 72.1 percent to 16.5 percent. HSA Algebra proficiency levels have also increased, but unlike English, the increase came mainly in movement from the basic range to the proficient range, while the percentage of students scoring in the advanced range remained under 2 percent. BTDHS achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in both 2008 and 2009.

### **George Westinghouse High School, Brooklyn**

In 2003, Westinghouse High School had an average attendance rate of 75 percent and a graduation rate of 43 percent. Four years later, attendance was at 84 percent and the graduation rate was up to 65 percent. In 2007-08 Westinghouse made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on its English and mathematics proficiency and its graduation rate. Beginning in September 2006, Westinghouse instituted a number of curricular and organizational changes, including a ninth-grade academy with two teams of teachers dedicated to the same students. The next year, the school moved into upper-grade career academies. In the spring of 2008, Westinghouse was cited in a "Schools That Work" report from the Center for an Urban Future, for its "dramatic" academic improvements and "unambiguous" results in improved attendance and graduation rates. In the report, Westinghouse's principal acknowledged Talent Development's role in reorganizing the schools into small learning communities and improving course-passing and promotion as a key to the school's turnaround.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/13/K605/default.htm>

## **Bridgeton High School**

Bridgeton (NJ) High School had been plagued for years by high dropout rates and a mobility rate three times the state average. In 2004, Bridgeton became a Talent Development High School, restructuring from a large comprehensive high school to five small academies – a ninth-grade academy, a credit recovery academy and three career academies. The ninth grade academy has had particularly positive results – the school’s ninth-grade dropout rate dropped from 15 percent to 11 percent – a difference of 20 students who stayed in school – in the academy’s first year. Attendance and absenteeism rates also improved and the percentage of students promoted to 10<sup>th</sup> grade continued to increase. Bridgeton High School was one of five schools recognized in *Rethinking High School, preparing students for success in college, career and life*, a study by WestEd for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In that study, Bridgeton was cited particularly for its ninth-grade academy, which helped students “make a successful transition into high school.”

## **Feltonville Arts and Sciences Middle School**

This Philadelphia public middle school has more than 700 students in grades 6 to 8. More than 56 percent of the students are Hispanic, about 30 percent African American, 7.7 percent Asian and nearly 4 percent white. Nearly 85 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and more than 10 percent are English Language Learners.

In 2008-09 Feltonville became a pilot for the Diplomas Now collaboration, a partnership of three proven school improvement organizations, Talent Development, City Year and Communities in Schools. The model includes organizational and management changes to establish a positive school climate; curricular and instructional innovations to prepare all students for high-level courses in math and English; parent and community involvement to encourage college awareness, and professional development to support the recommended reforms. Each partner is responsible for different aspects of the transformation model. Talent Development restructured the school day and works on staff development with teachers. City Year provides tutoring both in the classroom and after school. Communities in Schools provides case management for students who need one-on-one attention and services that decrease student behavior that may lead to dropping out. Feltonville showed dramatic results during the pilot year, reducing suspensions by 85 percent in the first two grading periods, compared to the previous year and reducing the number of suspension days by 82 percent during the same period. Likewise, significant strides were made in improving attendance and behavior and in the number of students passing mathematics and English.

### ***c. Specific examples of applicant’s successes in establishing partnerships within the community and how these partnerships assisted school improvement efforts***

**Chicago Talent Development High School:** Opened in September 2009, the Chicago Talent Development High School is actually a grassroots community project. Talent Development is a partner in this contract school with three labor unions, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the Service Employees International Union and the Chicago Teachers’ Union. The School Advisory Board and its design team are made up of

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professionals from the legal, educational, financial, and development sectors of the community – all working to establish this school in the West Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago, where no public high school was previously located. For students who may not have had effective elementary and middle school educations, CTDHs will provide an opportunity for them to achieve academically in a college preparatory program. By working with the community to design career academies and appoint board members, CTDHS is providing families a high school that reflects the priorities and interests of the citizens of West Garfield Park. The school opened with 95 ninth-graders in mid-September. Academic achievement and other data to measure the school’s performance are not yet available.

**Baltimore Talent Development High School:** This innovation high school, opened in 2004, has many community partners, who enhance the quantity and quality of opportunities for the 500 students in grades 9 to 12. Among the prominent partners:

- **Carroll Park Foundation:** Since 2006, this foundation has worked with more than 150 BTDHS students to restore a historic orchard in nearby Carroll Park. It is part of a larger historic preservation effort to save *Carroll's Hundred*, a Revolutionary-period landscape and its "lost" cultural legacy -- the contributions of Native Americans, African American slaves, free blacks, and indentured servants. The Black Damask Project connects high school students with the personal history of their community, and their important and meaningful role in it. From their participation in orchard cultivation, in apple harvest, in marketing apples to the city's school lunch program, and in handling actual artifacts from the orchard, students develop understanding and pride in the importance of their heritage and its relationship to the mainstream of American cultural life.
- **Youth as Resource grant:** The Baltimore-based Youth as Resource non-profit organization awarded a \$3,500 grant to help the students complete a Civic Engagement documentary, "We Used to Scrub Our Steps," which focuses on Baltimore neighborhoods. BTDHS has applied for four other grants, which are expected to be awarded in spring 2010.
- **Arts & Expression:** Artists and small business owners serve as "adjunct professors" at the school during a 45-minute period three days a week. Students will not only have the opportunity to express themselves artistically but also are exposed to core skills and challenges of different professions. Students have an opportunity to experience career options, ask questions about the profession, have professional standards modeled for them, and see how challenging work after high school can be. This is also a time for students to express themselves artistically and exhibit their many talents. Those participating include potters, video game designers, dancers, photographers and musicians. In addition to offering students opportunities they may not have in academic courses, these sessions also are incentives for students to attend school and to behave appropriately.



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**Cohen High School, New Orleans:** This high school in the Recovery School District of New Orleans has a host of partners, who provide opportunities and services to the students. Among the most prominent are student mentors and tutors from local universities, such as Xavier, Tulane and Dillard. University students provide academic help to students and also serve as role models to students who may be the first in their families bound for college. The various other partners provide a range of support – financial, athletic, health services and many more.

**Feltonville Arts and Sciences Middle School:** This Philadelphia middle school is the pilot for a new model of community involvement and a new model of dropout prevention, Diplomas Now. Talent Development is partnering with CityYear, a volunteer corps of young adults, and Communities in Schools, which provides direct services to students who need social services. The Philadelphia Education Fund joined the other organizations at Feltonville, to establish the pilot, to build on the Early Warning Indicators research that underpins the collaboration and to provide technical assistance to future Diplomas Now sites. The results to date have been dramatic in identifying and helping students who are showing early signs of straying from the graduation path. The PepsiCo Foundation contributed \$5 million to this effort, which is expanding to a half dozen cities, including Chicago, over the next two years.

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## City Year Results

*Results from a 2009 national survey of over 900 teachers and 230 principals and after-school liaisons show:*

Teachers and Principals agree that City Year corps members support the academic success of students:

- 90% of principals felt that City Year had an impact on the academic performance of students tutored.
- 81% of teachers felt that corps members helped their students feel more motivated to learn.
- 83% of teachers felt that corps members helped improve students active engagement in learning.
- 81% of teachers felt that corps members increase student time spent on learning tasks.
- 81% of teachers felt that corps members have helped improve the academic performance of the students they are tutoring.

Teachers agree that City Year corps members support their own work throughout the year:

- 72% of teachers felt that corps members helped them differentiate their instruction.
- 80% of teachers felt that corps members helped them to feel supported in their work.

### Improvements in pupils' attendance and behavior:

Research shows that the culture/climate of a school and the relationships between the students and adults is a factor in whether or not a student develops a positive connection to their school and therefore wants to attend. We know that a significant majority of teachers believe that City Year

contributes to this effort as demonstrated by results of end-of-year surveys administered to teachers, head teachers, principals and other service partners.

- 95% of teachers felt that corps members had a positive impact on student time spent on learning tasks; and
- 89% of principals and 85 % of teachers felt that corps members have helped foster a positive environment for learning.
- 81% of principals felt that corps members had an impact on the attendance of students they work closely with.
- 72% of principals felt that corps members had an impact on the respect that students exhibit to their peers regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or other differences.

70% of principals felt that corps members had an impact on the ability of students to generate peaceful solutions to conflicts among peers.

### **Communities In Schools Results**

In July 2008, Communities In Schools announced the first set of findings from a five-year longitudinal evaluation, the CIS National Evaluation. This study, which was conducted by ICF International, was designed to determine whether CIS has an impact on student-level and school-level outcomes. The initial results provide third-party, independent confirmation of what Communities In Schools has been proving for more than 30 years—the organization has a positive effect on keeping kids in school and helping them graduate prepared for life.

The CIS National Evaluation explores the impact of the CIS Model for integrated student services, and the contribution of the national, state and local CIS organizations in support of this impact. The study meets the highest level of research rigor and, at its conclusion, will yield results that meet the “gold standard” of scientifically-based evidence established by the U.S. Department of Education. Now at the mid-point of the study, the research confirms the effect of the CIS Model on school-wide outcomes. Research continues with randomized control trials to determine student level impact.

### **Overview of Findings**

Results from the newly released school-level evaluation confirm that, compared to other dropout prevention programs listed in the Department of Education’s best practice website, the “What Works Clearinghouse,” CIS is:

- One of a small number of dropout prevention organizations with scientifically-based evidence of effectiveness
- Of these, one of a handful proven to decrease dropout rates, and...
- The only organization proven to increase graduation rates

Results also confirm:

- CIS performs better than comparison schools in increasing the percentage of students meeting or exceeding math and reading proficiency in fourth and eighth grade.
- When the CIS Model of integrated student services is implemented with high fidelity, it correlates much more positively with school outcomes than mere service provision alone.
- Having a site coordinator on site more than 50 percent of the time correlates to much stronger positive school outcomes than when a site coordinator is present less than 50 percent of the time.

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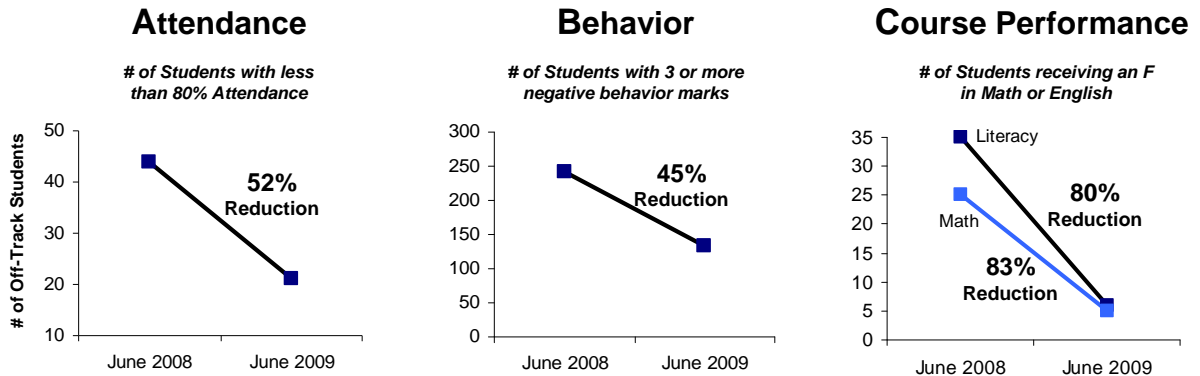
Specifically, when outcomes of CIS schools that have high fidelity to the CIS Model were compared with closely matched comparison schools:

- 3.6 percent fewer students dropped out
- 4.8 percent more students graduated on time with a regular diploma
- 5.3 percent and 6 percent more students reached proficiency in fourth- and eighth-grade math, respectively
- 2 percent and 4.9 percent more students reached proficiency in fourth- and eighth-grade reading, respectively.

## Diplomas Now Results

In the 2008-2009 school year, Diplomas Now was implemented in a large high-poverty middle school in Philadelphia. Working in partnership with school leadership and teachers, this school successfully made Adequate Yearly Progress for the first time in four years and the Diplomas Now model resulted in a 50% decrease in the number of students in grades 6-8 who were off-track to graduation based on the key indicators of:

- Attendance – 52% decrease in students with less than 80% attendance
- Behavior – 45% decrease in students with three or more negative behavior comments
- Course failure in Math and English – 83% decrease in the number of students receiving an F in Math and 80% decrease in the number of students receiving an F in English



## Names and contact information for references

### Peoria, IL

Peoria School District 150  
Dr. Herschel Hannah  
Associate Superintendent  
3202 N. Wisconsin Avenue  
Peoria, IL 61603  
(309) 672-6580

## **Southwest Independent School District (San Antonio, TX)**

Rosie Hidalgo  
Director of Secondary Instruction  
11914 Dragon Lane, Building 500  
San Antonio, TX 78252  
210-622-4335 ext. 16

## **Ware County School System (Ware County, GA)**

Dr. Joseph Barrow Jr., Superintendent  
1301 Bailey St.  
Waycross, GA. 31501  
912-283-8656

## **Schools**

### **Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences (middle school; Philadelphia, PA)**

Nelson Reyes, Principal  
Philadelphia Public Schools  
210 Courtland Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19120  
Phone: 215-456-5603/5306

### **Baltimore Talent Development High School (Baltimore, MD)**

Jeffrey Robinson, Principal  
1500 Harlem Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21217  
443-984-2744

### **Chicago Talent Development High School (Chicago, IL)**

Jacqueline Lemon, Principal  
223 North Keeler Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60624  
773-535-8650

# Illinois Partnership Zone: Lead Partnership Proposal

## Existing Performance Data Worksheet

Data Requested	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4											
School Name:	Feltonville Middle	McAuliffe Middle	Baltimore Talent Development High	David Starr Jordan High											
School District/Location:	Philadelphia City SD, PA	SW Independent SD, TX	Baltimore City SD, MD	Los Angeles Unified SD, CA											
Year Opened:			2004-2005	1925											
Current Grades Served:	6th-8th	7th-8th	9th-12th	9th-12th											
Current Enrollment:	712 (2008-09)	745 (2007-08)	507 (2008-09)	1672 (2008-09)											
School Model (Public/Charter/Other):	Public	Public	Public	Public											
School Type (New Start/Turnaround):			New Start	Turnaround											
Current Status (Academic Early Warning Status (AES))	Making Progress in Corrective Action	Academically Acceptable (2008)	Made AYP in both 2008 and 2009	In 08-09 made AYP in math proficiency rates, ELA participation rates, and graduation rate											
Academic Watch Status (AWS), Restructuring:															
<b>School Year</b>	<b>SY06</b>	<b>SY07</b>	<b>SY08</b>	<b>SY09</b>	<b>SY07</b>	<b>SY08</b>	<b>SY09</b>	<b>SY07</b>	<b>SY08</b>	<b>SY09</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>SY07</b>	<b>SY08</b>	<b>SY09</b>	
<b>Demographic &amp; Socio-Economic</b>															
School	% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch:	85	85		85	92	89		73	64	76			77	
	% Students Limited English Proficient:			10			8							34	
	% Students w ith Disabilities:			13			15		17	14	13			11	
District Average	% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch:		72		76	82	81		51	53	61			65	
	% Students Limited English Proficient:					15			1	1	1			24	
	% Students w ith Disabilities:					12			17	17	15			10	
<b>State Assessments<sup>2</sup></b>															
Assessment Name (Reading, Math):															
School	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Reading:	44	57	63	56	71	89	87	42	58	62	42	49	53	52
	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Math:	34	55	69	51	45	67	70	21	58	77	38	50	49	56
	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Comp.:														
District Average	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Reading:	45	49	56	62	83	88	87	48	65	68	54	66	70	71
	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Math:	37	44	49	51	63	70	71	29	64	66	48	61	70	70
	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Comp.:														
Similar Schools <sup>3</sup>	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Reading:								29	47	55				
	% Scoring "Meets" or above – Math:								17	44	49				

### Subgroup Averages (School): % Students Scoring "Meets" or above – Reading

White	70				56	99									
Black	45	56	59	56	75	91			57			35	40	47	52
Hispanic	39	54	65	53	71	89						44	51	54	52
Asian/Pacific Islander	58	75	82	78	N/A	N/A									
Native American	N/A				N/A	N/A									
Multiracial/Ethnic	N/A														
LEP	7	N/A	29	30	32	50						23	20	22	20
Students with Disabilities	7	8	0	11	34	50				50					
Economically Disadvantaged	44	57	65	56	69	88				55		42	50	55	56

### Subgroup Averages (School): % Students Scoring "Meets" or above – Math

White	40				50	67									
Black	33	50	59	49	25	45			58			26	39	42	52
Hispanic	29	56	72	46	45	68						40	52	50	58
Asian/Pacific Islander	65	75	100	83	N/A	N/A									
Native American	N/A				N/A	N/A									
Multiracial/Ethnic	N/A														
LEP	14	N/A	47	29	13	53						27	29	25	33
Students with Disabilities	7	8	8	11	11	45				33					
Economically Disadvantaged	34	55	70	51	43	66				58		39	50	49	58

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Data Requested		School #1				School #2			School #3			School #4			
School Name:		Feltonville Middle				McAuliffe Middle			Baltimore Talent Development High			David Starr Jordan High			
School Year		SY06	SY07	SY08	SY09	SY07	SY08	SY09	SY07	SY08	SY09	Base	SY07	SY08	SY09
Local Assessments															
Assessment Name (Reading, Math):															
Assessment Data Type (PR or NCE):2															
School	Score – Reading:														
	Score – Math:														
District Average	Score – Reading:														
	Score – Math:														

Other Performance Measures															
N/A	Student Attendance Rates:	90	91	92	94				88	83	82	86	85	84	86
N/A	Student Graduation Rates:	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	88	88	44	57	57	
N/A	Student College Attendance Rates:	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A							
N/A	Teacher Retention Rates:														
District Average	Student Attendance Rates:				94				83	63	84	94	93	94	94
	Student Graduation Rates:									63	63	65	67	72	
	Student College Attendance Rates:														
	Teacher Retention Rates:														
Similar Schools	Student Attendance Rates:								78	78	78				
	Student Graduation Rates:									65	66				

<sup>1</sup> Baseline measure for David Starr Jordan High is the average of the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, two years preceding TDHS implementation

<sup>2</sup> Percentages provided for David Starr Jordan High are percentages passing 10th grade High School Exit Exam

<sup>3</sup> Similar schools comparison for Baltimore Talent Development HS (BTDHS) contrasts BTDHS performance with aggregated performance of four demographically-similar non-selective neighborhood high schools in Baltimore City: Northwestern, Patterson, Forest Park, and Frederick Douglas

## 6. Fiscal and Management Capabilities

A. The Center for Social Organization of Schools (CSOS) was established in 1966 as an educational research and development center at Johns Hopkins University. The Center maintains a staff of full-time, highly productive sociologists, psychologists, social psychologists, and educators who conduct programmatic research to improve the education system, as well as full-time support staff engaged in developing curricula and providing technical assistance to help schools use the Center’s research. The Center currently includes the federally-supported Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk, and the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships.

B. Talent Development Middle Grades and Talent Development High School are comprehensive school turnaround models for schools facing serious problems with student attendance, discipline, achievement scores, and dropout rates. The model includes organizational and management changes to establish a positive school climate; curricular and instructional innovations to prepare all students for high-level courses in math and English; parent and community involvement to encourage college awareness; and professional development to support the recommended reforms.

## ***Qualifications of staff managing implementation, with Curriculum Vitae***

### **Dr. Robert Balfanz**

Center for the Social Organization of Schools  
Johns Hopkins University  
3003 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore MD 21218

## **Education**

Ph.D. in Education, University of Chicago, 1995.  
B.A. in History, Johns Hopkins University, 1984.

## **Professional Experience**

Principal Research Scientist, Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University 2008-Present

Research Scientist, Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University 2002-2007

Associate Research Scientist, Center for the Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University 1996-2002

Senior Author/Developer, University of Chicago School Mathematics Project-Elementary Component, 1991-1996

## **Professional Activities and Awards**

Co-Director Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University

National Governor's Association, Dropout Prevention Advisory Panel, 2008

Every Child a Graduate Award-Alliance for Excellence in Education 2007

Advisory Panel, College and Career Transitions Initiative, U.S. Department of Education.

Maryland Mathematics Commission 1999-2000

Editorial Board Member, NCTM, Math in the Early Years, 1996-1998

## **Selected Recent Scholarly Publications**

### *Books*

Balfanz, Robert, Fox, Joanna, Bridgeland, J and McNaught M (2009) Grad Nation Guidebook America's Promise Alliance: Washington DC



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Legters, N., Balfanz R., Jordan W., and McPartland J., (2002) *Comprehensive Reform for Urban High Schools: A Talent Development Approach* New York: Teachers College Press

### *Articles and Book Chapters (First and Co-Author)*

Balfanz, R (2009 ) *The American High School in the Twenty-First Century: The Challenge of Becoming an Avenue of Advancement for All* in J Kemple and C. Rouse Eds Future of Children High School Issue, Princeton, NJ

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Balfanz, R., Legters, N. & Jordan, W. (2004) *Catching Up: Impact of TDHS 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Instructional Program* NASSP Journal, 88(641) 3-30

- Balfanz R. (2004) *What Recent Research Has to Say About What Early Childhood Mathematics Educators Need to Know* in C. Greenes ed. *Challenging Young Children Mathematically* Golden Co: NCSM Monograph Series pp.4-14
- Balfanz, R., Spiridakis, K, Neild R., & Legters N. (2003) “High Poverty Secondary Schools and the Juvenile Justice System: How Neither Helps the Other and How that Could Change” Gil Noam ed. Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press
- Balfanz, R., Ginsburg H., & Greenes C. (2003) “Big Math for Little Kids Early Childhood Mathematics Program” *Teching Children Mathematics* 9(5) 264-268
- Balfanz, R., McPartland J., & Shaw A. (2002) “Reconceptualizing Extra Help for High School Students in a High Standards Era” *Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education* 25(1) 24-41
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- Balfanz, R, Ruby A, and MacIver, D. (2002) “Essential Components and Next Steps for Comprehensive Whole School Reform in High Poverty Middle Schools” in *Educating At Risk Students* eds. S. Stringfield and D. Lamb Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education
- MacIver, D. and Balfanz R. (2001) “No Excuses: Committing to Performance” *Principal Leadership* 1(6), 36:42
- Balfanz, R., and MacIver, D., (2000) “Transforming High-Poverty Urban Middle Schools Into Strong Learning Institutions: Lessons From the First Five Years of the Talent Development Middle School” *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* 5(1,2),137-158

### **Grants and Contracts**

Principal Investigator-College Know How Project-Institutute of Educational Sciences, US Department of Education, June 2008 to June 2011 \$1,200,000

Principal Investigator-CTE Evaluation of Philadelphia, US Department of Education, Sept 2007-Sept 2009, \$400,000

Principal Investigator-Evaluation of TDHS 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Program, Institute of Educational Sciences, US Department of Education, Sept 2007-Sept 2011, \$2,000,000.

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Co-Principal Investigator-Baltimore Educational Research Consortium-Spencer, Gates, OSI, Abel, Anne E. Casey and Blaustein Foundations, Oct 06-Oct 08, \$400,000

Principal Investigator-Dual Agenda-Raising Graduation Rates and Achievement-Carnegie Corp-Sub-Contract from Achieve \$50,000 June to Sept 2006

Philadelphia Out of School Youth Project-Calculating the OSY Rate in Philadelphia-William Penn Foundation, Sub-Contract from UPenn- Sept 2005-May 2006-\$70,000

Principal Investigator- "Middle Grades Dropout Predictors and Dropout Prevention Study" William Penn Foundation. July 2004-July 2006, \$500,000

Principal Investigator "The Impact of a Middle Grades Math Extra Help Lab" Institute of Educational Sciences, US Department of Education Aug 2005-Aug 2008, \$600,000

Co-Principal Investigator on "Investigating the Big Ideas: A Mathematics Program for Pre-School and Kindergarten Children" NSF #ESI-9730683 June 1998-June 2002 1,000,000 total \$370,000 to JHU

Associate Director and Co-PI for "Teacher Development- - In Service Professional Development---Models of Excellence" U.S. Dept. of Education ED-98-R-0023 Oct. 1998-Oct. 2001 \$1,800,000. Extended Through March 2003- \$300,000

Associate Director and Co-PI on "Increasing the Technical Capacity of the Talent Development Middle School Model" - U.S. Dept of Ed/OERI . Oct. 1999- Oct.2000 475, 000

## **Robert Balfanz**

### **Current and Pending Support**

#### **Current**

**R305B07508(Balfanz)** **07/01/07 – 06/30/11** **30%**

Department of Education

Successful Transitions to Algebra 1: Randomized Control Trial of Three Theories of Ninth Grade Algebra Instruction

**R305A080211(Legers/Balfanz)** **07/01/08 – 06/30/11** **10%**

Department of Education

A Curriculum Engagement: Micro-Process Interventions in High Schools to Improve Attendance, Behavior, Achievement and Grade Promotion

## Illinois Partnership Zone: Lead Partnership Proposal

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**R305A080544 (Balfanz)** **07/01/08 – 6/30/11** **25%**

Department of Education  
National Center for Education Research

**105056 (Balfanz)** **01/01/09 – 12/31/09** **20%**

Pepsico Foundation  
Evaluation of The Diplomas Now! Collaborative

**Pending**

**Current Proposal (Jonas)** **07/01/10 – 06/30/15** **15%**

Department of Education  
Evaluating the Impact of a Graduation and Completion Index in Virginia's School Accreditation System

**IES – 84.305 (Balfanz)** **07/01/10 – 6/30/15** **33%**

Department of Education  
Critical Resources for High Challenge, Chronically Low Performing Secondary Schools Early Warning and Intervention Systems and a Second Shift of Adults

**IES – 84.305 (Balfanz)** **07/01/10 – 6/30/13** **5%**

Department of Education  
Building Motivation, Reflection and Thinking in Biology

\*\*If all pending proposals are awarded, effort will be modified on all projects effective 7/1/10, and the remaining FTE taken over by other CSOS research scientists.

## **DOUGLAS JOSEPH MAC IVER**

### EDUCATION

A.B., 1979, Occidental College, magna cum laude, with departmental honors in Psychology, Phi Beta Kappa.

M.A., 1981, University of Michigan, Major: Developmental Psychology.

Ph.D., 1986, University of Michigan, Major: Developmental Psychology, Minors: Educational Psychology, Research Methodology, and Multivariate Data Analysis.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### CURRENT POSITIONS

Co-Director, Center for the Social Organization of Schools (CSOS), Johns Hopkins University, 2006 –present

Principal Research Scientist, CSOS, 1998-present

Director, The Talent Development Middle Grades Comprehensive Reform Model, 1994-present

#### PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Associate Director, CSOS, 1993-1998

Research Scientist and Program Director, CSOS, 1992-1998

Associate Research Scientist and Project Director, CSOS, 1988 - 1992

NIMH Postdoctoral Scholar in Applied Human Development, UCLA Graduate School of Education, 1986 – 1988 (Mentors: Deborah Stipek & Leigh Burstein)

Research Associate, Achievement Research Lab, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1983 - 1986

## SELECTED HONORS AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Community Service, Presented by the Johns Hopkins University and Medical Institutions, 1997

Co-Chair, Task Force on Middle Learning Years Education, Maryland State Department of Education, 1998-2001

Human Development Research Award (with Allan Wigfield, Jacquelynne Eccles, David Reuman, and Carol Midgley), Presented by American Educational Research Association's Division E, 1992

Research Committee, National Middle School Association, 1990 - 1995

High Strides Advisory Committee, Education Writers Association, 1992

Faculty member, Institute on Statistical Analysis for Education Policy, American Educational Research Association, 1992 - 1995

Charter Member, National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, 1997 - present

Steering Committee, National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, 2000 – 2003.

Advisory Board, Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Mac Iver, D. (1987). Classroom factors and student characteristics predicting students' use of achievement standards during ability self-assessment. Child Development, 58, 1258-1271.

Mac Iver, D. (1988). Classroom environments and the stratification of pupils' ability perceptions. Journal of Educational Psychology, 80(4), 495-505.

Stipek, D. & Mac Iver, D. (1989). Developmental change in children's assessment of intellectual competence, Child Development, 60, 521-538.

Epstein, J. L., & Mac Iver, D. J. (1990). Education in the middle grades: National practices and trends. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.

Epstein, J. L., & Mac Iver, D. J. (1990). The middle grades: Is grade span the most important issue? Educational Horizons, 68(2), 88-94.

- Mac Iver, D. J. (1990). Meeting the needs of young adolescents: Advisory groups, interdisciplinary teams of teachers, and school transition programs. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(6), 458-464. This article has been reprinted in Annual Editions: Educational Psychology 91/92. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing.
- Mac Iver, D. J., & Epstein, J. L. (1991). Responsive practices in the middle grades: Teacher teams, advisory groups, remedial instruction, and school transition programs. American Journal of Education, 99, 587-622.
- Mac Iver, D. J., Stipek, D. J., & Daniels, D. H. (1991). Explaining within-semester changes in student effort in junior high school and senior high school courses. Journal of Educational Psychology, 83, 201-211.
- Wigfield, A., Eccles, J. S., Mac Iver, D., Reuman, D. A., & Midgley, C. (1991). Transitions during early adolescence: Changes in children's domain-specific self-perceptions and -general self-esteem across the transition to junior high school. Developmental Psychology, 27, 552-565.
- Mac Iver, D. J., & Epstein, J. L. (1992). Middle grades education. In M. Alkin (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 6th Edition. New York: Macmillan.
- Mac Iver, D. (1992). Scheduling and school organization. In M. Alkin (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 6th Edition. New York: Macmillan.
- Mac Iver, D. J. (1992). Motivating disadvantaged early adolescents to reach new heights: Effective evaluation, reward, and recognition structures (Report 32). Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students.
- Mac Iver, D. J., & Epstein, J. L. (1993). Middle grades research: Not yet mature, but no longer a child. Elementary School Journal, 93, 519-533.
- Mac Iver, D. J. (1993). Effects of improvement-focused student recognition on young adolescents' performance and motivation in the classroom. In P. R. Pintrich & M. L. Maehr(Eds.), Advances in Motivation and Achievement: Vol. 8, Motivation and Adolescence (pp. 193-218). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Mac Iver, D. J. & Reuman, D. A. (Winter 1993/1994). Giving their best: Grading and recognition practices that motivate students to work hard. American Educator, 24-31. This article has been reprinted in Annual Editions: Education 95/96. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing.

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- Mac Iver, D. J., Reuman, D.A., & Main., S. (1995). Social structuring of the school. In M. R. Rosenzweig and L. W. Porter (Eds.), Annual Review of Psychology: Vol. 46, (pp. 375-40). Annual Reviews Inc.: Palo Alto, CA.
- Mac Iver, D. Mac Iver, M., Balfanz, R. Plank, S.B., & Ruby, A. (2000). Talent Development Middle Schools: Blueprint and results for a comprehensive whole- school reform model. In M. G. Sanders (Ed.), Schooling students placed at risk: Research, policy, and practice in the education of poor and minority adolescents (Chapter 12, pp. 292-319). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Mac Iver, D.J., & Balfanz, R. (2000). The school district's role in helping high-poverty schools become high performing. In B. Gaddy (Ed.), Including at-risk students in standards-based reform: A report on McREL's Diversity Roundtable II. (Chapter 4, pp. 35-69). Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).
- Balfanz, R. & Mac Iver, D. J. (2000). Transforming high poverty urban middle schools into strong learning institutions: Lessons from the first five years of the Talent Development Middle School. Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk, 51(1&2), 137-158.
- Mac Iver, D.J., Young, E., Balfanz, R., Shaw, A., Garriott, M., & Cohen, A. (2001). High quality learning opportunities in high poverty middle schools: Moving from rhetoric to reality. In T. Dickinson (Ed.), Reinventing the middle school (pp. 155-175). New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Mac Iver, D. J., Young, E. A., & Washburn, B. (2002). Instructional practices and motivation during middle school (with special attention to science). In A. Wigfield & J. Eccles (Eds.), Development of achievement motivation (pp. 333-351). San Diego, Ca: Academic Press.
- Balfanz, R., Mac Iver, D.J., & Ryan, D. (2002). Enabling "algebra for all" with a facilitated instructional program: A case study of a Talent Development Middle School. In V. Anfara, (Ed.), Middle school curriculum, instruction, and assessment: Volume 2 in the handbook of research in middle level education. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing. [A peer-reviewed research annual sponsored by AERA's Research in Middle Level SIG.]
- Balfanz, R., Ruby, A., & Mac Iver, D. (2002). Essential components and next steps for comprehensive whole-school reform in high poverty middle schools. In S. Stringfield & D. Land (Eds.), Educating At-Risk Students: One Hundred-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. (pp. 128-147). Chicago, Il: NSSE.



- Mac Iver, D.J., Ruby, A., Balfanz, R. & Byrnes, V. (2003). Removed from the list: A comparative longitudinal case study of a reconstitution-eligible school. Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 18 (3): 259-289.
- Mac Iver, D.J., Balfanz, R., Ruby, A., Byrnes, V., Lorentz, S., & Jones, L. (2004). Developing adolescent literacy in high poverty middle schools: The impact of Talent Development's reforms across multiple years and sites. In P.R. Pintrich and M.L. Maehr (Eds.), Motivating students, improving schools: The legacy of Carol Midgley (Advances in Motivation and Achievement, Volume 13, pp. 185-207). Oxford, U.K.: Elsevier.
- Balfanz, R., Mac Iver, D. J., & Byrnes, V. (2006) The implementation and impact of evidence based mathematics reforms in high poverty middle schools: Multi-school, multi-year studies. Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 37, 33-64.
- Mac Iver, M. & Mac Iver, D. J. (2006). Which bets paid off? Early findings on the impact of private management and K-8 conversion reforms on the achievement of Philadelphia students. Review of Policy Research, 23, 1077-1093.
- Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., & Mac Iver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle-grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. In K. Wentzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), Promoting motivation in school: Interventions that work [Special Issue], Educational Psychologist, 42(4), 223-235.
- Mac Iver, M. A. & Mac Iver D. J. (2008). Middle school reform. In T. L. Good (Ed.), *21<sup>st</sup> Century Education: A reference handbook*. (Vol. 2, pp. 309-317). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mac Iver, D. J., Ruby, A., Balfanz, R., Jones, L., Sion, F., Garriott, M. D., et al. (in press). The Talent Development Middle Grades Model: A design for improving early adolescents' developmental trajectories in high-poverty schools. In J. Meece & J. Eccles (Eds.), *Handbook of research on schools, schooling, and development*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

### SELECTED MAJOR GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

#### Current

Subaward Project Director on U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Comprehensive School Reform Quality Initiatives Program Grant, *Enhancing Middle-Grades Mathematics Outcomes for All: Strengthening Mathematics Teaching and Learning for Special Populations*. The subaward to JHU is approximately \$606,000 over 3 years.

### Past Grants

Co-Investigator on U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Efficacy Grant, *Evaluation of the Computer and Team Assisted Mathematics Acceleration Lab for Urban, High-Poverty, High-Minority Students in the Middle and High School Grades*. Approximately \$1.1 million over 3 years.

Principal Investigator on National Science Foundation ROLE grant to Johns Hopkins University for study of the achievement effects of a decade of educational reforms in Philadelphia. Approximately \$1 million over 3 years.

Co-Principal Investigator on Interagency Research Initiative Grant, *Implementation and Impact of Reading, Mathematics, and Science Instructional Interventions for Middle and High School Students in the Context of Talent Development Reforms*. Approximately \$6 million over 5 years.

Co-Principal Investigator on a Model Design and Evaluation Contract from U. S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, *Constructing the Talent Development Model across the Middle and High School Grades with Adaptations for Diverse Rural and Urban Locations*. Approximately \$11.6 million over five years.

Program Director on grant from the U.S. Department of Education to form a *Consortium of Secondary School Comprehensive Reform*. Approximately \$7.5 million for 3 years.

Co-Principal Investigator on grant from the U.S. Department of Education, *Building Capacity of the Talent Development Middle and High School Models*. Approximately \$3 million for 3 years.

Subaward Project Director on a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Developing and Disseminating Effective Middle Grades Reforms*. The Philadelphia Education Fund was the prime awardee. \$500,000 over two years.

Principal Investigator on a grant from the National Science Foundation, *Alternatives to Tracking in High Schools to Increase Minority and Female Participation in Mathematics and Science*. \$200,000 over two years.

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### Current support

<b>Project/ Proposal Title:</b> R305A080211 <i>A Curriculum of Engagement: Micro-Process Interventions in Middle and High School to Improve Attendance, Behavior, Achievement, and Grade Promotion for At-Risk Ninth Graders</i>		
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Period Covered</b>	<b>% of effort</b>
U.S. Department of Education	07/01/2008-06/30/2011	25% each year

<b>Project/ Proposal Title:</b> The Diplomas Now! Collaborative: Keeping Every Student on the Path to HS Graduation & Adult Success		
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Period Covered</b>	<b>% of effort</b>
Pepsico Foundation	09/01/2008-08/31/2011	10% each year

### Pending support

<b>Project/ Proposal Title:</b> Identifying and Exploring New Standards of Practice		
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Period Covered</b>	<b>% of effort</b>
U.S. Department of Education	1/1/2010-12/31/2012	33% each year

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If awarded the percent of effort on the current support will be adjusted.

## Douglas R. Elmer

212 E. 74<sup>th</sup> Street, Kansas City, MO 64114 \* 816-507-9903 \* douglaselmer@gmail.com

### Experience

#### Midwest Regional Manager

August 2006-Present

#### Talent Development High Schools-Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, MD

Manage over 15 high school reform projects in Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, and Missouri for Talent Development High Schools (TDHS) that impact over 3,000 students. Specific duties include:

- Developing program agreements and budgets accounting for over \$700,000 in revenue
- Establishing and overseeing implementation plans and timelines for each school.
- Managing a team of 9 instructional facilitators who work with over 100 administrators, instructional coaches, and facilitators.
- Engaging principals, teachers, and other stakeholders in solving complex problems related to school culture, academic achievement, and building-level school reform.

Recruited 10 additional schools for the 2009-2010 as part of TDHS scale-up initiative

Served as project manager and lead author on a successful contract school proposal in Chicago, IL. Specific duties included:

- Writing action plan for completion of contract school proposal. This proposal was selected out of a initial group of 50 applications, and selected from 3 finalists for the West Garfield Park neighborhood in Chicago.
- Managing Design Team for the school during the writing and evaluation phase of the application process.
- Serving as a lead respondent for TDHS during evaluation interviews with Chicago Public Schools.
- Developed and helped implement the community outreach campaign during the evaluation process.
- Designed a hiring plan for the principal, and served as part of the hiring team for our planning year staff, including the principal, organizational facilitator, and business manager.

Selected by TDHS Executive Committee to serve as a member of the Leadership Team for TDHS

- This group of managers and organizational executives works to ensure that TDHS continuously works towards having a significant, positive impact on our nation's lowest performing high schools
- Specific duties include designing and implementing recruitment plans, collaborating on staffing decisions, and engaging in problem solving around complex issues related to both our partnerships with schools and internal program management
- Selected by TDHS Chief Operating Officer as a Leadership Intern. developed a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure that addressed internal policies on professional development, communications, and logistics

# Illinois Partnership Zone: Lead Partnership Proposal

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## **Kansas City Field Manager**

**July 2003-August 2006**

### **Talent Development High Schools-Johns Hopkins University**

**Kansas City, MO**

- Tasked with implementing and managing a comprehensive school reform initiative at 5 schools in Kansas City, Missouri for TDHS
- Managed a team of 6 instructional coaches whose work with teachers and students contributed to a 19% increase in Algebra I passing rates and a 12% increase in English 9 passing rates. Additionally, the graduation rate for our first cohort of students rose 8 percent from the baseline established in previous years.
- Developed and provided professional development programs for over 100 teachers at 5 schools.
- Worked with principals to develop master schedules and curriculum implementation plans.
- Collected, analyzed, and presented data to the school board and district administration.
- Interacted with other reform providers and funders to help manage and report on use of a multi-million dollar William and Melinda Gates Fund grant that supported our work through 2007.

### **Instructional Coach-Germantown High School**

**August 2002-July 2003 Philadelphia Education Fund**

**Philadelphia, PA**

- Provided job-embedded professional development for 14 language arts teachers at an urban, comprehensive high school.
- Daily activities included modeling and co-planning with teachers, guiding teachers through reflective practice activities, and working with teachers to develop professional growth plans. This work with teachers contributed to a 15% increase in 9<sup>th</sup> graders passing English 9.
- Developed articulation of Talent Development curriculum with Philadelphia Public Schools core curriculum in language arts.
- Assisted with development of an attendance initiative that resulted in 11% increase in average daily attendance.

### **Teach For America Corps Member/Language Arts Teacher- Central High School**

**June 2000-August 2002 Newark Public Schools**

**Newark, NJ**

- Committed two years to participating in a highly selective program aimed at providing an excellent education to students in under-resourced schools.
- Taught 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading and honors language arts at Central High School in Newark, NJ during my time as a Teach For America corps member.
- Majority of students saw gains of at least one grade level during the first semester of instruction as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading test.
- Worked as the freshman football coach, assistant wrestling coach, and Do Something club advisor during my two years at Central High School.

# Illinois Partnership Zone: Lead Partnership Proposal

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<b>Education</b>	<p><b>2006-present Candidate for Ph.D. in Education Policy</b></p> <p><b>University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS</b></p> <p>Minor: Public Administration</p> <p>GPA: 3.99 anticipated Graduation May 2010.</p> <p><b>2004-2006 Master of Education in Education Leadership</b></p> <p><b>University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS</b></p> <p>GPA: 4.0</p> <p><b>1996-2000 Bachelor of Arts Degree</b></p> <p><b>Franklin and Marshall Lancaster, PA</b></p> <p>Major: English</p> <p>GPA: 3.2, 3.7 in major</p>
<b>Teaching Certifications</b>	<p>Secondary School Principal 7-12, State of Missouri (In Process)</p> <p>Language Arts 9-12, State of Missouri</p> <p>Language Arts 9-12, State of New Jersey</p>
<b>Recent Presentations</b>	<p>“A Retreat from Integration: Changes in Racial Composition in the Post Unitary Era, 1991-2005.” Presented at the American Education Research Association, March 29, 2008, New York, NY</p> <p>“Budgeting, Scheduling, and Staffing in a Talent Development High School.” Presented at the Talent Development High Schools National Conference, July 12, 2008, Baltimore, MD</p> <p>“Balancing Successful Academic and Career Preparation: The Talent Development High Schools Approach.” Presented at the University Wisconsin Center on Education and Work, January 28, 2009, Madison, WI</p> <p>“An Examination of School District Finances in Post-unitary School Districts After <i>Dowell v. Oklahoma Board of Education</i>, 1991-2005.” Accepted for presentation at the American Education Research Association, April 2009, San Diego, CA</p>
<b>Interests</b>	<p>School start-ups, education reform, language arts instruction, social justice in education.</p>

## KATHY OKERLUND NELSON

5012 ELSMERE PLACE  
BETHESDA, MD 20854  
301-564-6064

- *Whole School Turnaround*

### **Johns Hopkins University's Center for the Social Organization of Schools**

**Director of Implementation.** Manage national field sites for the Talent Development Middle School Program, a comprehensive whole school turnaround model. Duties include guiding schools through the application process and planning year, negotiating contracts, serving as a liaison with school principals and district officials, site visits, overseeing the implementation process, and giving awareness sessions about the model.

### **Metro DC School Management Program.**

**Regional Director.** Managed UCLA School Management Program office in the Washington, DC and Boston metropolitan areas. Coordinated whole school change training for K-12 educational leaders. Customized management & instructional modules included curriculum design, assessment, public engagement, educational leadership, technology, and school-to-work,

### **UCLA School Management Program. Los Angeles, CA**

**Manager.** Managed the planning, design, and implementation of a program providing executive management training to K-12 practitioners & administrators in the Los Angeles Unified School District implementing whole-school change. Primary responsibilities included curriculum development in conjunction with UCLA faculty; coordinated efforts with training providers in the corporate, not-for-profit, and education sectors.

- *Standards-based reform.*

**Consultant.** Provide training and technical assistance to public school districts developing K-12 content and performance standards. Recent contract include:

Akron-Westfield School District; Westfield, IA

Los Angeles Unified School District; Los Angeles, CA

Cincinnati Public Schools; Cincinnati, OH

Columbus Public Schools; Columbus, OH – included K-16 alignment

Flint City Public Schools; Flint, MI - included developing a district-wide assessment system.

- *Curriculum Design*

### **Close Up Foundation. Alexandria, VA.**

**Program Manager.** Responsible for designing, managing, and evaluating citizenship education programs for secondary students and for K-16 educators. Duties included developing educational programs and materials; marketing; conference presentations; and staff development. Projects included securing and managing federally funded programs, teacher training, and curriculum projects; provided training and technical assistance for educators from American Indian Tribes, Pacific Island nations, and Russia.

# Illinois Partnership Zone: Lead Partnership Proposal

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**Curriculum Coordinator.** Developed curriculum for and managed the implementation of educational programs for secondary students and K-12 practitioners throughout the US, Eastern Europe, and Pacific Island nations. Designed and implemented instructional staff training; researched and produced curriculum materials on citizenship education.

**Co-Author: American Indian Citizenship in Balance.** A curriculum unit on the concept of dual citizenship as it applies to American Indians. Used in social studies classrooms in 104 Bureau of Indian Affairs high schools. Made possible by a grant from the US Department of the Interior.

- ***Instruction and Program Management***

**Close Up Foundation. Alexandria, VA.**

**Program Manager & Instructor.** Implemented the Close Up educational program of providing citizenship education to secondary students & educators. Supervised and evaluated instructional staff. **Designed components of curriculum and taught** daily courses covering topics such as international relations, defense, domestic policy, economics, & US History.

**Stanford University. Palo Alto, CA.**

**Director.** "Law, Politics & Government." Developed curriculum; hired and trained faculty, and organized all aspects of an enrichment program for secondary students. With faculty, implemented academic courses and activities on the political process, law & foreign policy.

**Leysin American High School. Leysin, Switzerland.**

**Teacher.** US History, U.S. Literature, World Affairs, and Journalism. Faculty advisor to student government, yearbook and National Honor Society.

**Jordan School District. Sandy, UT.**

**Teacher.** Social Studies and English. Secondary level.

- ***Education and Honors***

**University of Virginia** M.A. Candidate - Curriculum & Instruction

**Brigham Young University** B.S. & Teaching Certificate - Social Studies

**Taft Fellow:** "American Indian Politics." University of Montana Taft Teacher Institute. New York, New York. June 1993.

- ***Presentations***

**"The Teacher as Leader".** UCLA Advanced Management Program Summer Institute for 200 K-12 administrators. Palm Springs, CA.

**"Civic Education in Your Community."** Department of Education, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Inservice workshop. Saipan, FSM.

**"Teaching Active Citizenship."** Guam Department of Education. Conference on "The Inter-disciplinary Classroom." Agana, Guam.

**"Civic Education in the United States."** Youth Creators of the 21st Century. Teacher workshop. Moscow, Russia.



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## ***Evidence of financial, organizational, and technical resources to administer implementation***

Financial Services. The University Comptroller will provide monthly statements to the Center's business and accounting office and to the Principal Investigators to monitor the budget. The Center's business office will assist with staffing and university regulations.

Dissemination Services. Staff will assist with mailings of reports, requests for products and information, and dissemination of information to schools and school districts.

Computer Services. CSOS is a unique department within Johns Hopkins in that the LAN is a self-contained, self-supported network. The LAN consists of 170 workstations both in-house and remote, 12 file servers that run our e-mail, website, accounting, anti-virus, remote access, network management, back-ups, file sharing, databases and various other functions. A staff of 2 computer specialists supports this network and assists with the procurement of all computers and software, as well as the use of technologies such as videoconferencing and webcasts.

Other Services. In addition to the Homewood Research Administration and Comptroller's services with grants and monthly financial statements (see Financial Services, above), Johns Hopkins University provides offices, libraries, Internet, and other services.

Audits and tax returns: Please see attached.

Proof of legal authority to do business in Illinois: Please see attached.

## **7. Exceptions to the RFSP**

The Johns Hopkins University has reviewed the terms and conditions in the Appendix F and has the following comments:

Under Article 4 – (b) – Subcontract Requirements - request deletion of “its subcontractors.”

Under Article 6 – b) – Ownership of Custom Work Product – The University is a 501 – (C) – 3, private non-profit educational institution. The University is willing to negotiate terms and conditions that will be acceptable to both parties.

Under Article 6 – c) – License to Embedded Software – Not applicable to this project

Under Article 6 – d) – The University is not providing a custom work product

Under Article 9 – a) – Default and Termination – Request a 30 day written notification

Under Article 9 – c) – last sentence – Insert “reasonably” at “Any damages “reasonably” incurred by ISBE...

Under Article 10 – Indemnification – Request deletion of “its subcontractors”, and “or indirectly.”

Under Article 20 – Request revision to governing law provisions

Additionally, the University requests the inclusion of a “publicity” clause.

**8. Contracts with ISBE** – The Center for the Social Organization at Johns Hopkins University does not have and has not had a contract with ISBE, currently or within the past five years.