

Validating the Talent Development-Diplomas Now Secondary School Turnaround Model (ABSTRACT)

The Talent Development Secondary program (TD) at Johns Hopkins University is applying for a Validation Grant, in partnership with 14 school districts, City Year (CY), and Communities In Schools (CIS), to validate a whole school reform and student support model specifically designed to turn around Absolute Priority 4 schools with low graduation rates and their feeder middle schools. These are the secondary schools which drive the nation's dropout crisis. TD meets Competitive Preference Priorities 6 and 7 by supporting special education students and English Language Learners (ELL) and ensuring students receive the support needed for college readiness, access, and success.

The grant to TD would: 1) Bring our most advanced version of the TD model, known as Diplomas Now (TD-DN) - which has been explicitly designed to enable the successful turnaround, restart, or transformation of the nation's lowest performing schools - to 60 middle and high schools in 14 districts, serving 57,000 students; and 2) Support an independent, third-party randomized experimental study by MDRC to estimate the impacts of TD-DN and to show under what conditions this combination of reforms can enable high schools with 30%-60% graduation rates to achieve graduation rates of 80% or more and reduce by two-thirds the number of middle school students sent to high school off-track and behind grade level.

TD-DN will provide the management, operations, external evaluation, and sustainability required to serve students effectively. TD-DN has secured the full 20 percent match (\$6 million) from the PepsiCo Foundation as well as significant in-kind donations from other partners. The infrastructure and financial wherewithal is in place to scale the TD-DN Turnaround model beyond the schools involved during the grant.

Official Partners: Non Profits: City Year (CY) and Communities In Schools (CIS). Following a tiered intervention model, TD-DN pairs evidenced-based comprehensive school reform with City Year teams, to provide tutoring, mentoring, monitoring and engagement activities at the required intensity and scale, and CIS integrated student supports, for the highest need students.

TD-DN LEA partners have the greatest number or highest concentrations of high needs, low performing secondary schools in the nation: School Districts: Chicago Public Schools, Detroit Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, Miami-Dade Public Schools, Louisiana Recovery School District, School District of Philadelphia, New York City Department of Education, District of Columbia Public Schools, Seattle Public Schools, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, Northeast Independent School District (TX), Richland County School District One (SC), Southwest Independent School District (TX) , San Antonio Independent School District (TX), Whitehall City School District (OH).

Independent Evaluators: MDRC and ICF.

Other Partners: State Departments of Education of Louisiana, South Carolina and New York, Union Park High Schools, Deloitte Consulting, School Loop, Pearson PreVent, the Philadelphia Education Fund and the City of Philadelphia.