Validating the Talent Development-Diplomas Now School Turnaround Model

Johns Hopkins University,
Center for Social Organization of Schools

Project Narrative

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Absolute Priority 4: Innovations that Turn Around Persistently Low-Performing Schools

Competitive Preference Priority 6: Talent Development – Diplomas Now (TD-DN) incorporates multiple practices and strategies to ensure students graduate from high school prepared for college success. Through **Talent Development's college-preparatory academic sequence**, all ninth-graders complete a one-semester seminar on strategies for meeting the increased academic demands of high school followed by the Success Highways Student Resiliency Curriculum to increase a student's likelihood of post-secondary success and college persistence. TD's research-based classes include college preparatory reading, writing and advanced mathematics. **City Year** corps members are near-peers, the majority of whom recently went through the college application and financial aid processes. They provide mentoring to students on college access, including FAFSA workshops, PSAT/SAT prep, writing support, college application help and SAT registration drives. **Communities In Schools'** integrated student support model has been recognized as an important element for college preparation by the American Youth Policy forum. CIS has developed a streamlined, comprehensive curriculum of college and career access information called Charting for Success, which teachers use to help students develop a road map for post-secondary education.

Competitive Priority Preference 7: TD-DN follows the Response to Intervention approach to closely monitor students at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education and in special education. TD-DN supports the instruction of special education students in the least restrictive environment by: including special education teachers in planning and professional development related to

program implementation; providing professional development, coaching, and planning between subject area and special education teachers; and assisting with the development of modifications and accommodations to curricula and instructional strategies. Content-area facilitators work with coaches and teachers to develop lessons blending successful academic instruction with additional scaffolds necessary to support ELL students. The model also supports and nurtures students with unique learning needs through on-site support from City Year and Communities In Schools**.**

A. Need for Project and Quality of Project Design

In today's economy, adults without a high school diploma will find few, if any, jobs that can support a family. Yet, one in four students and three out of five low-income and minority students do not graduate from high school. This not only weakens our nation's competitiveness, but also threatens its social fabric (Kirsch *et al* 2007).

We find ourselves in this troublesome situation because too many of our low-income and minority students are concentrated in middle and high schools that are failing. These schools are simply not equipped to meet the educational challenge that they face. In 2,000 of our nation's high schools, graduation is close to a 50/50 proposition (Balfanz & Legters 2004). These schools, found in every state, produce half the nation's dropouts and two-thirds of its minority dropouts. They are the nation's dropout factories. Each of these high schools, in turn, is linked to one or more middle schools, where at least half of eventual dropouts begin the process of disengaging from school. By the time they get to high school, these students already have one foot out the door, as witnessed by their declining attendance, poor behavior, and increasing course failures in grades six to nine (Balfanz, Herzog & MacIver 2007). The U.S. Department of Education recognizes this problem and through Title I School Improvement Grants and the Race to the Top competition has called on states and school districts to turn around, restart, close and

replace, or transform these schools. It has placed a high priority on dramatically improving high schools with graduation rates below 60% and their feeder middle schools.

The whole-school reforms and comprehensive interventions needed to assist, augment, or replace Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) Absolute Priority 4 secondary schools must be robust and intense enough to make dramatic improvements in contexts where nearly all students have high needs and most live in neighborhoods of concentrated and intergenerational poverty. This level of need leads to high schools where half of the entering ninth-graders have reading and mathematics skills at the fifth-to seventh-grade levels, hundreds of students miss a month or more of school and/or are suspended, the average grade is a D, and more than one-third of students are not being promoted to 10th grade (Neild & Balfanz 2006). It creates middle schools where at least half of the entering students are falling off the graduation path as early as sixth grade, a fifth of students can miss a full year of school cumulatively between the 6th and 8th grade, and the majority of students see their achievement gaps widen (Balfanz & Byrnes 2006).

Meeting the Need

The Talent Development Secondary program at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Social Organization of Schools proposes, in partnership with 14 high-poverty, high-minority school districts (including Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York, Detroit, New Orleans, and Miami - which have the greatest number or highest concentrations of high-need, low-performing secondary schools in the nation), City Year, and Communities In Schools, to validate a whole school reform and student support model that can turn around high schools with low graduation rates and their feeder middle schools (see appendix A for complete list of commitment letters). Over the past 15 years, we have been developing, testing, refining, and continually improving the Talent Development Middle Grades and High Schools comprehensive

school reform models to create the strategies, tools, supports, materials, trainings, and know-how to enable states and districts to turn around the nation's high-poverty secondary schools. i3 funding will allow us to validate our most advanced version of these models, the **Talent Development-Diplomas Now secondary turnaround model** (TD-DN). This model is designed to successfully turn around the nation's low graduation rate high schools and their feeder middle schools to enable all students to graduate prepared for college, career and civic life.

The TD-DN turnaround model combines Talent Development's comprehensive set of evidence-based, organizational, instructional, and professional development whole school reforms, supports, and materials with an early warning indicator and multi-tiered student support system to enable high needs secondary schools to get the right intervention to the right student at the right time, at the scale and intensity required. It integrates into the model the core strengths of two national non-profits that support students and have strong evidence of impact.

City Year (CY) places diverse teams of 8 to 20 young adults (AmeriCorps members with an average age of 22) selected through a competitive process (average of five applications per CY corps member position) into TD-DN schools to implement its research-based Whole School, Whole Child student support model. This solves the scale problem of how to reach the hundreds of students who need daily, moderate-intensity supports to stay on track to graduation. The City Year teams are in school before students arrive through an extended day to provide continuous attendance monitoring, tutoring, mentoring, homework support and extended day academic and enrichment opportunities to every student demonstrating an off-track indicator.

Communities In Schools (CIS) implements its research-based integrated student support model and provides case-managed, high intensity supports to the neediest 50 to 100 students who are most impacted by poverty, and who will not succeed unless the underlying issues that prevent

school success are addressed. This solves the problem of how to support students with truly great academic and non-academic needs.

I3 funds will be used to scale and validate the TD-DN model in 60 middle and high schools in 14 districts. Forty of these schools (and an additional 40 control schools) will participate in a randomized controlled trial to enable the highest quality and most scientifically rigorous evaluation of the TD-DN model's impact and potential. The remaining 20 schools will be selected to complete feeder patterns consisting of a low-graduation-rate high school and one to three low-performing middle schools that send most of their students to the high school. (See Timeline in Section G for more detail.) This will enable future evaluations to establish the cumulative impact of attending transformed middle and high schools and the TD-DN model's impact on college readiness and success.

Research Foundations of the TD-DN Secondary Turnaround Model

The TD-DN model is a response to key research findings and our experience working in and with low-performing, high-poverty schools over the past 15 years. We have identified five key factors that a secondary school turnaround model needs to address:

It is possible to significantly improve low-performing secondary schools and still leave many students behind. To make sure that every student succeeds, a more robust intervention that combines whole school improvement with integrated and comprehensive student supports is required (Balfanz 2009, Adelman & Taylor, 2000).

At least half of future dropouts in high-poverty schools begin signaling that they are disengaging from school as early as sixth grade (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007). By ninth grade, up to 80% have struggled with the "ABC" indicators: attendance, behavior and

effort, and course performance (particularly course failure). Such students with off-track indicators are typically concentrated in a sub-set of high-need middle and high schools.

Student attendance, behavior-effort, and course performance not only help determine a student's odds of graduating from high school, but also drive or undermine academic achievement. In the middle grades, attendance, behavior, and effort all had independent and additive impacts on mathematics achievement, over and above those associated with a highly effective teacher. Even the best teachers will not be fully effective if students do not attend, behave, and try (Balfanz & Byrnes 2006). The Chicago Consortium on School Research has shown the link between good course performance and high attendance as the strongest driver in gains on the ACT test (Allensworth. Correa & Ponisciak 2008). These key findings suggest that a comprehensive and integrated effort to improve student attendance, behavior-effort, and course performance has the potential to improve both graduation rates and student achievement levels **(**MacIver & MacIver 2009).

Seeking to capitalize on the insight that students were falling off-track as early as the sixth grade, we began working with middle and high schools to implement an early warning and intervention system. **We quickly learned that it is essential to use a technology system able to present data to teachers in an easy, understandable and timely manner**. Despite valiant efforts, there often is not enough capacity or time to address the hundreds of students with off-track indicators through conventional means. This led us to first modify and then generalize the public health "prevention and intervention" and "response-to-intervention" models to identify best practices for school- wide strategies that encouraged attendance, good behavior, and effort, as well as targeted and intensive interventions for students who needed additional supports. The

goal was to rationalize and organize all the existing student supports in the school and those provided by community partners into an integrated system.

Even with a better system for integrating existing student supports and ready access to early warning data, **there still was a lack of dedicated person power to reach the hundreds of students who needed targeted interventions, or the 50 to 100 students who needed intensive case-managed interventions in the highest needs secondary schools** (Herzog, Liljengren, Mulvihill & Balfanz 2009).

Based on these findings, we designed the TD-DN turnaround model specifically to meet the unique challenges of persistently low-performing secondary schools.

Talent Development – Diplomas Now Turnaround Design

1. Effective Research-Validated Whole School Reform

- Personalized learning environment with teams of teachers working with the same 75-90 students
- Challenging research-based instructional programs linked to college readiness standards
- Career academies in the upper grades to link school learning to skills needed for adult success
- Extensive professional development for administrators and teachers, including instructional coaching and professional learning communities
- Accelerated learning courses for students below grade level
- Comprehensive programs for family and community involvement - direct ongoing support from Johns Hopkins' National Network of Partnership Schools

2. Early Warning System with Tiered Responses

- Coordinated early warning system alerts teachers as soon as students begin to demonstrate off-track indicators (primary indicators: Attendance, Behavior, Course Performance)
- Technology partners (School Loop and Pearson's Prevent) provide user friendly, early warning data at the classroom level in schools/districts that do not currently have the capacity to do so
- Early warning system linked to three-tiered prevention & intervention system is tightly integrated into day-to-day school practice (Tier 1: School-wide prevention, Tier 2: Targeted interventions of moderate intensity for small groups, Tier 3: Higher intensity one-on-one interventions)

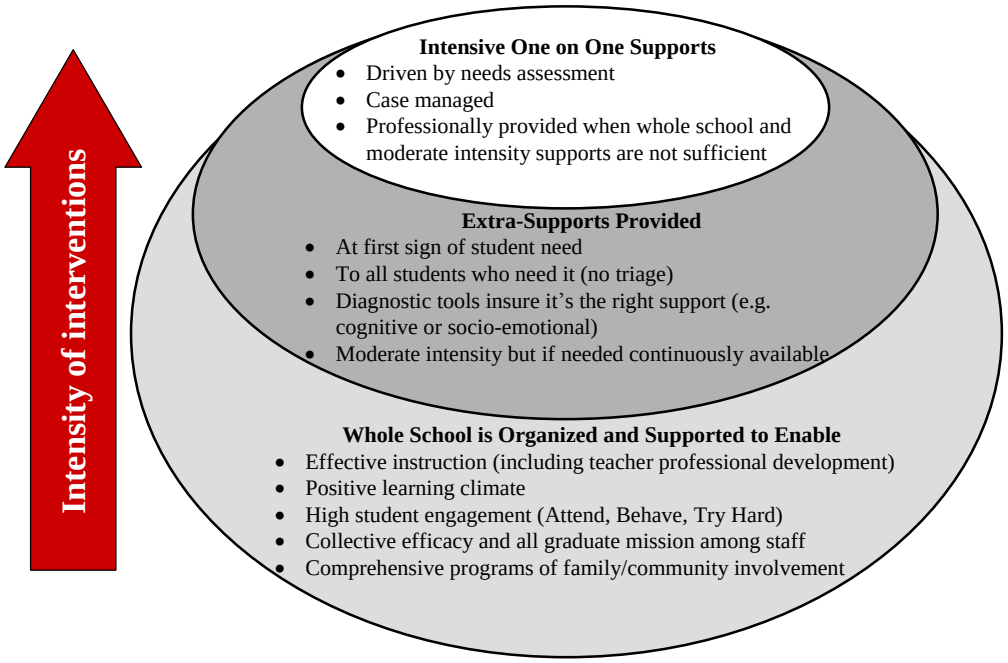
3. Second Team of Adults to Provide Targeted and Intensive Supports at Required Scale and Intensity

- Teams of City Year corps members working as "near -peer" mentors and role models and extend the day, provide targeted interventions, and teacher supports
  - Extended Day: Enables schools to offer after-school and community service opportunities ;
  - Targeted Interventions: Tutoring/mentoring, attendance monitoring, and homework support to hundreds of students in need of extra academic and socio-emotional support;
  - Teacher Support: Assist teachers with early warning data systems, enable more differentiated instruction in the classroom
- Site Coordinator from Communities In Schools connects community resources with academic and social service needs of students. Case management for the highest needs students.

4. Team-based Organizational Structure to Make Job Manageable

- Emphasis on mission-building to establish shared purpose among teachers and administrators for ensuring students stay on path to graduation
- Organize school day and week so teachers have significant collaborative time at inter-disciplinary (core teachers who share students) and subject level (e.g., all math teachers)
- On-site reform and student supports staff (TD, CY,CIS) integrated into school leadership team

Talent Development – Diplomas Now School Design Model



Two critical elements of the TD-DN design allow for successful integration and implementation of the model. First, the **early warning data system** is used to flag students who exhibit an off-track indicator - poor attendance, behavior, or course performance. An example for an 8th grade class can be seen below. In the i3 project we will work with two technology partners, School Loop and Pearson Prevent, to provide teacher-friendly early warning data systems with classroom-level data to schools and districts that lack this capacity. Both of our technology partners are making considerable in-kind contributions to the effort (see letters of support in appendix D).

Early Warning Indicator Data Tool

	Attendance				Behavior Comments		Math Grades		Literacy Grades		Assessments		
Student	07-08: Days Absent	08-09: Days Absent	07-08: Att.%	08-09: Att.%	Dec	Mar	Dec	Mar	Dec	Mar	Reading Grade Level	Math PSSA 2008	Literacy PSSA 2008
A	9	19	95%	84%	5	6	C	D	D	C	8	Proficient	Basic
B	12	13	93%	89%	7	8	D	C	F	D	6.5	Below Basic	Basic
C	48	69	73%	43%	10	10	F	F	F	D	5.5	Below Basic	Below Basic

Second, and most essential, is that **great care and effort is taken to integrate the TD-DN turnaround model into the day-to-day operations of the school**. Teacher teams are created so that four teachers work exclusively with a group of 75 to 90 students. The school day and school week are organized so teachers have considerable time to work collaboratively and collectively, in a facilitated manner, to improve their craft and work as a team to keep students on track to graduation. Early warning indicator meetings are held bi-weekly, during which teacher teams, Talent Development facilitators, City Year corps members, the CIS site coordinator and school support staff examine the most recent early warning indicator data, devise interventions for off track students, and monitor progress and make mid-course adjustments (as needed) for students already being supported. Finally, the TD turnaround manager, CY program manager, and CIS Site coordinator are all members of the school leadership team, and meet weekly with school leaders to fine tune and improve implementation of the TD-DN turnaround model.

Talent Development-Diplomas Now Goals and Strategy

With the i3 grant, we aim to validate that this combination of reforms and supports is powerful enough to enable high schools that are currently graduating only 30%-60% of their

students to achieve graduation rates of 80% and above, and also ensures that their graduates meet required state standards. For middle schools, our goal is to dramatically reduce by two-thirds the number of students sent to high school off-track and behind grade level.

Our theory of action is that whole school organizational reforms and student supports create a personalized school climate that is conducive to good teaching and learning and inspires students to attend, behave, and try. Upper grade career academies in high schools link school learning to the skills needed for adult success. A comprehensive program of family and community involvement engages families in their children's education and provides the tools and supports they need to help their children succeed. The instructional reforms provide all students with a standards-based college preparatory curriculum and the research-based extra help to succeed in it. The professional development reforms, including instructional coaching, provide teachers with the ability to continually improve their craft and deliver high-quality, challenging lessons to all students. The multi-tiered student support system guided by early warning indicator data and employing a second shift of adults from City Year and CIS ensures that no student gets lost, that intervention occurs at the first sign of trouble, and that teachers and administrators do not become overwhelmed by the volume and intensity of academic and non-academic supports students require.

City Year corps members and the CIS site coordinator add unique value to the student support components of the TD-DN turnaround model. As near-peers and constant adult figures in the school, CY corps members have a unique ability to support students academically and emotionally throughout the day. Corps members greet every student as they enter school. They call the families of all students who are absent. During the school day, each CY corps member follows a target group of students into their classes and provides one-on-one and small group

tutoring, as well as out-of-class activities that complement instruction. Their in-class presence also enables teachers to more easily differentiate instruction, and to stay on-course if one student acts up. Corps members provide a bridge from in-school learning to after-school activities, and are able to ensure that students who need extra help attend after-school programs and receive homework help. Corps members provide structured enrichment activities to strengthen their connections to their school and community (including community service). CY corps members develop strong bonds with students by working with them in a variety of settings. This allows for more timely referrals to the CIS site coordinator, who then brokers critical community resources to ensure students' non-academic needs are met. The CIS site coordinator also helps the school conduct a needs assessment to identify the highest-need students, and works with school leadership and student support personnel to provide community-based integrated student supports. In this way, CIS improves student outcomes by connecting community resources with both the academic and social service needs of students. The site coordinator then organizes case managed and sustained individual interventions for students with the highest needs.

Talent Development, City Year and Communities In Schools have worked together over the last two years to integrate their interventions into a seamless school reform and student support system with on-site implementation assistance that is deeply embedded into the day-to-day fabric of partner schools. These processes are detailed in sections E and G. TD-DN also works closely with districts and states, often through the Title I school improvement process, to identify schools most appropriate for the model. We then engage in extensive training and capacity building activities to enable rapid and high-fidelity implementation of the TD-DN model. These processes are detailed in section E. The TD-DN model is designed to work in a variety of school reform settings, including school turnaround, transformation, and restart. Its

comprehensive and highly supportive nature makes it a strong model for schools with large numbers of new teachers and administrators. The TD-DN model helps districts and states meet federal criteria for the transformation and turnaround approaches by: 1) developing teacher and school leader effectiveness; 2) providing comprehensive instructional reform strategies; 3) extending learning time and community-oriented schools; and 4) providing operational flexibility and sustained support.

The versatility of the TD-DN model is illustrated by the school turnaround environments where it has been and will be implemented during the 2010-11 school year. TD-DN is one of ten identified Lead Partners (following the Mass Insight model) in Chicago, where it currently operates a unionized charter school as part of the Renaissance 2010 effort. TD-DN is the only approved non-charter school turnaround initiative in Philadelphia, is the school improvement model for three high schools in the Recovery School District in New Orleans, and is a core turnaround reform model in a high school and middle school undergoing transformation in Columbia, S.C.

B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect

Convincing evidence that the proposed program will have statistically significant, substantial, and important effects on improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation rates is drawn from multiple research studies investigating the impact of the program on these outcomes and on intermediate variables (such as increases in attendance, course passing, credit earning, and promotion rates and decreases in suspension rates) that are strongly correlated with these outcomes. This evidence is drawn from quasi-experimental studies that meet WWC Clearinghouse standards by simultaneously combining a carefully

matched comparison group design with an interrupted time series design to guarantee high internal validity, and from experimental studies of program components that also allow strong causal conclusions regarding program impacts. Further, the positive impacts have been replicated across enough different studies, grade levels, cohorts, and schools to suggest that the findings have at least moderate external validity.

Independent, Third-Party Evaluation Studies. MDRC conducted independent, third-party evaluations of the Talent Development (TD) program's impacts on student performance in Philadelphia's high schools (Kemple, Herlihy, & Smith, 2005) and middle schools (Herlihy & Kemple, 2004, 2005). MDRC used a comparative interrupted time series analysis to estimate the model's effects on student outcomes. The first step in estimating impacts with this design is to measure the change at TD schools in a given student outcome, for up to five or six years after the school has begun using the model, relative to the average outcome during a three-year pre-implementation baseline period. The next step is to measure the corresponding change during the same period for similar schools in the district that are not implementing the model. This measurement provides an estimate of how student performance would have changed at the TD schools in the absence of TD's reforms. The *difference* between these two changes is an estimate of the impact of the intervention – what TD caused to happen.

The high school study---Kemple et al (2005)--evaluated the impacts that TD produced in the first five Philadelphia high schools to adopt the program by comparing the changes in these schools with changes in six non-TD comparison schools. Specifically, each TD school was matched with a set of non-TD comparison schools in the same district. "The non-TD schools are similar to their comparison schools in terms of race/ethnicity, prior test scores, attendance rates, and promotion rates over the years leading up to TD implementation" (p. 36). To further

strengthen its analysis, MDRC took account of the slight changes occurring in the composition of a school's student population over time by incorporating individual student characteristics into the analytic model (controls for ethnicity, 7th-grade test scores, and repeater status.)

TD produced significant, substantial and pervasive impacts on credits earned, promotion rates, and attendance rates during the first year of high school. For example, TD increased the attendance rate by 5 percentage points, increased the core academic curriculum completion rate – the percentage of students earning at least 5 credits during ninth grade and at least one each in math, English and science -- by 8 percentage points; raised the promotion to 10^{th} grade rate by 8 percentage points, and increased the proportion of students who earned a credit in algebra by 25 percentage points.

These impacts surfaced during the first year of implementation and were replicated as the model expanded to other schools in the district and as subsequent cohorts of students entered ninth grade. Furthermore, the impacts on credits earned and promotion rates were sustained as students moved through high school. For example, TD produced a 7-percentage-point increase in the students promoted to 11^{th} grade, and a 10-percentage-point increase in students who earned a minimum of three math and three English credits through 11^{th} grade – key indicators of staying on course for graduation. Finally, TD had modest positive effects on 11^{th}-grade math achievement test scores and also improved the likelihood of graduating on time by about 8 percentage points (an average of about 40 additional graduates per year per school).

MDRC's final report from the middle school study (Herlihy & Kemple, 2005) focuses on the impacts of TD on the achievement levels of students by the end of eighth grade. Each TD school was matched with a set of highly similar, non-TD schools, and a comparative interrupted time series analysis was conducted. The sample included eighth-graders from six TD middle

schools and 18 non-TD schools. TD had a positive impact on math achievement that became significant by the third year and then strengthened further during the next three years. While both the TD and non-TD schools displayed improved eighth-grade performance in mathematics over the years, the improvements were significantly greater in TD schools than in non-TD schools. By implementation year 3, the cumulative improvement was 2.1 normal curve equivalents (NCEs) greater in TD than in non-TD schools. By years 4, 5, and 6, the cumulative improvement was 2.5, 2.9, and 3.4 NCEs greater in TD than in non-TD schools. By year 6, the effect size had reached 0.23 standard deviations.

When TD began implementing its model in Philadelphia, 75% of the eighth-graders were performing in the bottom quartile on the state mathematics assessment. One goal of TD's mathematics program was to significantly reduce this percentage and begin to close the achievement gap in math between Philadelphia's typical student and Pennsylvania's typical student. While both TD and non-TD schools were able to progressively reduce this percentage, TD schools achieved greater reductions each year than did non-TD schools. By year 6 of program implementation, TD schools had reduced the percentage of students scoring in the bottom quartile by more than 30 percentage points and this reduction was 11 percentage points (0.29 standard deviation units) greater in TD schools than in non-TD schools. TD schools also produced "improvements in the percentage of students who regularly attend middle school" (p. 12).

In sum, MDRC's evaluation studies show that TD has had positive and significant impacts on a range of important outcomes in both middle and high schools. Further, the design of these studies was particularly rigorous, addressing many concerns typically raised about research that does not use random assignment. "While no quasi-experimental methodology irrefutably

establishes causality, this version of the comparative interrupted time series method provides a strong basis on which to attribute changes in student performance to TD." (Kemple *et al* 2005, p. ES-4).

Although the design eliminated all major threats to the internal validity of this research, the external validity was not quite as strong in that the findings reflected impacts found in just five high schools and six middle schools in one city (although each school was studied over multiple years and across multiple cohorts of students). Specifically, questions regarding how the findings could be generalized to other schools in other cities could not be answered definitively. That most cities have many schools that are similar to the non-selective, high-poverty, high-minority schools in which TD was implemented in Philadelphia increases confidence that TD implementation in these cities may have similar effects. Although the TD schools in Philadelphia achieved reasonable fidelity of implementation for many key components, Kemple *et al* (2005) noted that the district took a hands-off posture with respect to TD, sanctioning adoption of the model but providing no official support. They suggest that TD's implementation and impacts may prove to be even stronger and more pervasive in other cities if the districts provide more official support and recognition of the model and give TD "greater authority to institute changes in the schools, control staffing and leadership, and command funding and resources" (p. 86).

Randomized Experiments Evaluating Specific Components of TD. Balfanz, Ruby, & Mac Iver, 2008's experimental evaluation of TD's Mathematics Acceleration Lab – a targeted intervention that provides extra help in mathematics to any student who needs it as an elective – included 985 underperforming students in grades 5-9 (from five middle schools and one high school) who were randomly assigned to the lab or to another elective (control) for one semester.

At the beginning and end of the semester, students in both groups took the CTBS TerraNova Survey Mathematics Test. The lab group outgained the control group by 4.1 NCEs ($p < .001$).

Davis & McPartland (2009) are engaged in an experimental study of TD's Adolescent Literacy Program, a school-wide instructional package for middle and high schools that includes three types of supports – professional development workshops, written lessons derived from evidence-based practices for accelerating adolescent literacy for more than 200 books of interest to adolescent readers, and regular in-classroom assistance from an expert peer coach. These supports equip teachers to frequently and effectively implement research-based approaches to developing adolescent literacy in their classrooms.

Davis and McPartland (2009) assigned each participating school to one of three conditions: (1) TD's standard instructional package in which teachers receive support from a workshop series, extensive lesson materials, and frequent expert coaching, (2) an economy version that includes the workshops and lesson materials but no coaching, or (3) a cut-rate version that includes just the workshop series. Interim impact findings are available from 41 schools with 84 teachers and 1,996 ninth-graders. The primary outcome shows that student reading comprehension gains between September and May are significantly and substantially greater in schools receiving TD's full literacy program (an NCE gain close to 5) than in schools receiving just the workshop series or the workshop series plus materials (NCE gains of about 3). Observers' reports of teachers' use of the recommended practices parallel these findings: schools that received the full program had teachers who used the recommended practices significantly more often, for more minutes, and with greater quality than did teachers in either one of the "partial treatment" control conditions.

Neild, Byrnes, & Balfanz (2010) are conducting a randomized trial that compares TD's approach to helping under-prepared ninth-graders catch up mathematically and succeed in freshman algebra with a common alternative approach. Under both approaches, these ninth-graders take math as a double period (spending 80-90 minutes per day with the same teacher all year). Under TD's approach, they take TD's catch-up course during the first semester, followed in the second semester by the district's algebra curriculum). Under the alternative "Stretch Algebra" approach, students take a whole year of double period algebra using the district's curriculum. Randomization occurred within districts at the school level. Interim results cover the first eight districts participating. Students in the TD condition outscored those in the "Stretch Algebra" condition by 3.6 national percentiles ($p = .02$) on the CTBS mathematics test and earned first semester marks that were a letter and a half higher (more As, Bs, and Cs, and fewer Ds and Fs).

Does the TD Middle Grades Model Help Keep Students on a Path that Leads to Graduation? Mac Iver *et al.* (2010) estimated the impact of the TD Middle Grades model on preventing students from developing the early warning indicators of dropout risk as sixth-graders and on students' eventual on-time graduation by comparing the data of 540 students from the first three TD schools in Philadelphia with the data of 604 students from 3 matched comparison middle schools that did not use TD. The researchers found that students in the TD schools were significantly and substantially more successful than those in non-TD schools in preventing students from developing early warning indicators. Also, TD students were more likely than comparison students to earn on-time promotions each year in middle and high school (e.g., 91% of the TD students made it to ninth grade on time vs. 80% of the comparison students) and had higher on-time high school graduation rates. A multivariate binary logistic model controlling for

race, gender, special education, and English Language Learner status found that students who attended a TD middle school for 3 years (in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) were 55% more likely to graduate on time than were comparison students.

More Research on TD. Appendix H describes methods and results from additional quasi-experimental studies, all of which found significant and substantial impacts of TD. Highlights include studies of TD's: middle grades literacy program (impact on reading achievement gains during the middle grades of .29 standard deviations [SDs] and program participants are 73% more likely to overcome a reading deficit), middle grades mathematics program (impact on achievement growth of .24 SDs), middle grades science program (impact on achievement growth of 2 NCEs per year) and ninth-grade instructional programs (impacts on reading and math achievement of .27 and .35 SDs.) The studies include a comparative quantitative longitudinal case study of a reconstitution-eligible school that adopted the TD Middle Grades model as its turnaround plan and for the next four years outgained its closely matched comparison school in math, reading, and science achievement and in attendance and promotion rates. Appendix H also summarizes research on Johns Hopkins' comprehensive family and community involvement programs, one component of TD-DN with impacts on a wide range of student outcomes

Research on the educational effectiveness of TD's official non-profit partners—City Year and Communities in Schools – is described in below in section C.

C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant

Center for Social Organization of Schools / Talent Development Experience

The Center for Social Organization of Schools (CSOS) at Johns Hopkins University has a more than 40-year track record of using a framework of "research, develop, test, refine, and

disseminate" to create and spread practical and effective solutions to meet the challenge of educating students who live in poverty. These include: the Talent Development Middle Grades and High School models, and the National Network of Partnership Schools (school, family, community program). The Talent Development (TD) Secondary program is led by Dr. Robert Balfanz and Dr. Douglas MacIver, who have wide experience implementing complex programs, including large scale, multi-district randomized control trials. Over the past 15 years, Talent Development has grown from working with a single high school in Baltimore and a single middle school in Philadelphia to working, in the 2009-10 school year, with more than 100 middle and high schools in 20 states. It has established a dedicated technical assistance unit staffed by 50 experienced educators organized into regional teams in the East, South, Midwest, and West who provide implementation support to schools and work with multi-disciplinary researchers on model development and improvement.

The Talent Development-Diplomas Now model brings with it the organizational capacities of not only TD and CSOS but also the substantial capacities of its two other official non-profit partners, City Year and Communities In Schools. Together, these partners have more than 95 years of experience implementing successful, high impact programs in schools.

City Year Experience

For 22 years, City Year (CY) has been uniting diverse young adults for a year of full-time service, giving them the skills and opportunities to help children succeed, and in the process, develop themselves as leaders for the common good. These "corps members" are deployed in teams to work in high-poverty urban schools helping students through direct academic, school climate and after-school interventions. CY was a national model for AmeriCorps and the CY corps has grown from a pilot program of 50 members in Boston in 1988 to more than 1,550

members serving 75,000 students in 140 schools in 20 cities across the United States and internationally in Johannesburg, South Africa and London, England. CY is a national 501(c)3 organization, and each city ("site") is led by an experienced management team overseen by an advisory board of local leaders. CY expands to approximately one new site per year, and due to strong management, oversight, and sustainability practices, has never had to close a site. In addition to direct programmatic work, City Year manages Voices for National Service, a coalition of over 60 nonprofit organizations, which disseminates information to inform public policy on the impact of national service.

City Year has distilled two decades of service experience into a powerful school service model for elementary and secondary schools called Whole School, Whole Child (WSWC). Developed in collaboration with scholars from the American Institutes for Research, Harvard School of Education, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Pittsburgh, WSWC is a structure that leverages the unique value of CY corps members to provide a portfolio of research-based academic interventions, extended learning programs, and activities that foster increased academic achievement and a positive school climate.

City Year has successfully built a sustainable and diverse revenue model that leverages AmeriCorps funds, private-sector sponsorships, philanthropic investment and district and school contributions.

Communities In Schools Experience

Founded 33 years ago by life-long children's advocate Bill Milliken, CIS emerged out of the "street academies" launched in the 1960s-70s to give dropouts a second chance to earn a high school diploma and attend college. Over time, CIS saw that these alternative "academies" could

not adequately meet all the needs of America's youth. This realization launched a process of creativity, evaluation, and refinement that led to the creation of Integrated Student Services (ISS) – bringing community supports inside the school in a coordinated way to address both individual student and whole school needs. ISS covers student needs from PK-12 through a research-based understanding of the risk factors that lead to failing high school and dropping out. CIS is recognized as the national leader in integrated student support provision.

As CIS has gained experience and grown, it has continually refined its approach. Recognizing the important findings of its national evaluation that identified core practices associated with high performance, the CIS national office launched a quality assurance process, Total Quality System (TQS). TQS provided a clearly articulated set of standards and benchmarks that all CIS affiliates must meet to become accredited in the CIS network. These standards update expectations for effective management, define a unified and coherent site model, strengthen the CIS identity, and ensure that affiliates receive appropriate assistance at all stages of development.

By 2009, CIS had 181 affiliates in 25 states and the District of Columbia and partnerships with 472 districts. As a result, nearly 1.3 million students received direct services, and 2.1 million students attended schools with a CIS presence. Over the past 10 years, CIS has added 28 new affiliates and 1,100 school sites. This expansion, largely driven by existing affiliates going deeper into their communities, has allowed the CIS network to double the number of students it has served since 1999.

Evidence of Non-Profit Impact on Achievement, Attainment, or Retention

Evidence of the impact of the TD middle and high school models on improved student achievement, attainment, or retention is substantial as detailed in the Strength of Research

section above. Below, we summarize the significant evidence of impact on achievement and advancement from our two official nonprofit partners, Communities In Schools and City Year.

Communities In Schools

Communities In Schools is in the final year of a five-year external evaluation conducted by ICF International. This school-level quasi-experimental study, meeting the requirements for moderate evidence, compares 602 CIS schools with 602 matched comparison schools on a wide range of outcomes, including dropout and graduation rates, attendance, and academics. Four cohorts of CIS schools, implementing the program between 1999-2000 and 2002-03, were studied from baseline to three years post-implementation. Net change scores (i.e., difference-in-difference calculations) were calculated for each outcome measure to determine the net gain (or loss) CIS experienced relative to the comparison group on each measure.

Schools that implemented the CIS model with fidelity had strong results in math achievement in elementary, middle and high schools (net change = 5.2% elementary, 6.0% middle and .8% high school), and in fourth and eighth grade reading (net change = 2.3% for 4^{th} grade and 5.1% for 8^{th} grade). The strongest effect sizes were seen in middle school math and reading (ES = .53 and .36 respectively). CIS had positive effects on both dropout (net change = 2% for CIS overall and 3.6% for high implementers) and on-time graduation rates (net change = 1.7% for CIS overall and 4.8% for high implementers), and effect sizes were strong among CIS sites that implemented the model with fidelity (dropout ES = .36 and graduation ES = .31). As demonstrated, effect sizes for high implementers were above the WWC threshold for a "substantively important" effect on both dropout and graduation. The implication of these findings is that CIS keeps students in school, and also gets students to graduation on time.

City Year

Evidence from multiple studies conducted by third-party evaluators demonstrates the positive outcomes of CY's programs on student achievement and attainment. Several focused studies or analyses by external organizations provide evidence of the positive effects of City Year on student achievement, growth and attitudes toward learning and school:

During the 2008-09 school year, RMC Research evaluated City Year New York's service in 19 elementary schools across New York City. This report found that frequency of student contact with corps members was significantly associated with positive outcomes in academic motivation, conflict resolution and resilience. Teachers and administrators had positive reactions to working with corps members. About 70% of teachers reported that corps members helped increase literacy achievement, helped acquisition of positive character traits, and contributed to a positive school climate.

A third party evaluation conducted by RMC Research Corporation (2008) of City Year Philadelphia's work in high schools reported the following outcomes among participants in CY's College and Career Mentoring program: 59% of 613 student respondents felt more connected to school (exceeding a target of 50%); 71% of 584 student respondents reported an increase in college and career preparedness.

Philadelphia school district data (2008-09), analyzed by third party evaluator Research for Action, added preliminary evidence of City Year's impact on academic achievement. Of students who received a "C" or worse during the first marking period and who then worked closely with a City Year member during the year, 51% and 60% of 6th-10th grade students improved by one or more academic grades in English and math, respectively. Results from internal evaluations from the 2008-09 school year provide additional evidence of CY impact: in

Washington D.C., 61% of students tutored by CY increased by one or more proficiency levels on the DIBELS literacy assessment vs. 39% of non-tutored City Year students.

Communities In Schools and City Year Accelerate Impact of Talent Development

The primary strength of the TD-DN turnaround model is the additional human capital provided to high-need secondary schools. This includes an on-site Talent Development turnaround manager/early warning indicator and intervention system facilitator, 8 to 20 City Year corps members, and a Communities In Schools site coordinator. These additional personnel, combined with the core technologies of the TD-DN model (described in section A) and the re-organized and supported efforts of the school staff, create the opportunity for rapid school improvement. Early results from TD-DN schools illustrate this:

The Feltonville School of Arts & Sciences in Philadelphia is a large school where 85% of its 712 students receive free/reduced lunch, and 96% are minorities. In its first year of piloting the TD-DN turnaround model, the school made Adequate Yearly Progress for the first time and was able to reclaim 4,500 instructional hours by dramatically decreasing suspensions.

Analyses by the Philadelphia Education Fund also showed a 48% decrease in students with poor attendance; a 45% decrease in students with negative behavior incidences; and over an 80% decrease in the number of students failing math and English.

In New Orleans, three high schools began implementing the TD-DN turnaround model in the 2009-10 school year, Cohen High School, Carver High School and John McDonogh High School. Each school averages about 450 students, who are 99% minority, and 90% on free/reduced lunch. Aggregate data for the three high schools from August-December 2009 compared to the same time period in 2008, before implementation of the TD-DN turnaround model, found: an 11-percentage-point increase in Average Daily Attendance; a 46% decrease in

the number of violent incidents reported; a 27 percentage-point increase in the number of students passing at least four courses.

D. Quality of the Project Evaluation

The proposed evaluation will be a well-designed experimental study. MDRC will conduct an independent, third party experimental study of program impacts by randomly assigning schools to implement the TD-DN turnaround model or to continue with other educational strategies for school improvements ("business as usual"). Reflecting the goal of school turnaround, our impact estimates will examine whether the intervention produces improvements in the attendance, behavior, and course failure/success of successive cohorts of students entering the study schools, as well as achievement and graduation outcomes. (See "Specification of Student Outcomes," below) This evaluation design will provide the strongest causal evidence of the impacts of the program.

Overview of Analytical Approach. We will recruit approximately 80 low-performing secondary schools in the 14 school districts partnering on this proposal that are appropriate for and interested in implementing TD-DN turnaround model at middle schools, high schools, or both. We seek to include in the study an equal number of middle and high schools (that is, 40 middle schools and 40 high schools).

Randomization will occur *within school levels (middle v. high)* and *within districts.* Half of the middle schools and half of the high schools will be randomly assigned to TD-DN model treatment, and the rest will serve as the control group. This will allow us to estimate impacts separately at the middle and high school levels, in addition to estimating a combined impact across all 80 secondary schools. We anticipate that the schools assigned to the control group will

institute other school improvement efforts, which means that our impact study will analyze the effects of TD-DN model as compared to other policy relevant alternatives.

We will track outcomes for three successive longitudinal cohorts of sixth-graders (at the middle grades level) and ninth-graders (at the high school level). New sixth- and ninth-grade cohorts will be tracked beginning in Years Two, Three, and Four, respectively. During the course of this project, we will be able to track one cohort through eighth grade/eleventh grade, allowing the final year for write-up; a second cohort through seventh grade/tenth grade; and a third through sixth/ninth grade. As the grant period will end before it is possible to measure and write up graduation outcomes for ninth-grade students in participating high schools (and ninth-grade success for the younger middle school students), we have set-aside $100,000 from the PepsiCo Foundation to complete these additional outcome analyses within 18 months of the end of the i3 grant period. Nevertheless, given the strong documented relationship between being "on track" and graduation outcomes, the intermediate outcomes of having "on track" attendance, behavior, course performance, credits earned, and promotions earned are important in and of themselves.

Our basic impact estimate will be a two-level model with students nested in schools with any blocking done in random assignment accounted for in the analysis. (We are not proposing a three level model--students nested in teachers nested in schools--because secondary school students have multiple teachers). To improve the precision of the impact estimate (statistical power), we will include covariates in the impact model for key student baseline characteristics such as ELL, special education, and free/reduced price lunch status, prior state test scores, and students' grade level in their first year of enrollment in a study school (the latter for analyses that pool across grades). To reduce concerns about multiple hypotheses testing producing statistically

significant impacts by chance, we will follow IES guidelines (NCEE 2008-4081) by pre-specifying a small number of primary – confirmatory – research questions. These include the basic "intent-to-treat" impact on a limited number of key student outcomes of providing access to the intervention and for a small number of pre-specified key student subgroups identifiable through pre-random assignment characteristics. The second safeguard uses composite statistical tests to "qualify" or call into question multiple hypothesis tests that are statistically significant individually but that may be, due to chance, in the context of mixed results. In addition to this confirmatory analysis, we will pre-specify a longer list of exploratory questions that will examine the reasons for the confirmatory findings, including examining the association between contextual and implementation features with impacts on student academic outcomes.

For our combined sample of 80 secondary schools, we estimate minimum detectable effect sizes (MDESs – defined as the smallest true effect that can be detected for a specified level of power and significance level for any given sample size) of .15 on student academic outcomes, which translates into 6-percentage-point impacts on dichotomous outcomes such as passing a course or meeting an attendance threshold. These calculations are based on conservative estimates of a sample of 80 schools split 50/50 between treatment and control, 100 students per grade in middle schools and 350 students per grade in high schools, 80 percent power, an R^2 of covariates in predicting outcomes of 0.68, a statistical significance level of .05 with a two-tailed test, and an intra-class correlation of .16, based on the proposed evaluator's empirical analysis of student record data from multiple school districts. Separate analysis of middle and high school impacts based on approximately 40 schools in each sample would have minimum detectable effect sizes of .17 for middle schools (7 percentage points on dichotomous outcomes) and .21 for high schools (9 percentage points on dichotomous outcomes).

Specification of Student Outcomes. We propose to measure key student academic outcomes in the three domains of attendance, behavior, and course failure/success, drawing on student records from participating school districts. The TD-DN team has identified several middle and high school academic outcomes as being especially important and predictive of future academic success: 1) an attendance rate of at least 90 percent, 2) never suspended, 3) number of course failures, and 4) promotion to the next grade (in high school). These also will be combined into an overall "on-track" composite measure of: attending school at least 90 percent of the time, and not being suspended and, passing math and passing English, and – for high school – earning sufficient credits for promotion to the next grade.

In addition to the above outcomes, we will use middle school achievement test score data as an additional academic outcome measure, with a covariate for prior achievement. We will examine high school achievement data to the extent that it is available. Across the states, high school examinations are offered in different ways, often with states administering high stakes tests starting in a specific grade and providing multiple opportunities for students to sit for and pass subject matter tests to advance to graduation. Depending on the policies in place in our study states at the time of the analysis, we will incorporate scores from these tests in the analysis. We can estimate impacts on scores at the first sitting for subject matter examinations or on the probability a student will have passed needed tests by the end of a specific grade, perhaps the 11^{th} grade.

Our evaluation will permit us to examine mediating variables, as well as academic outcomes. We propose to field student surveys in the spring of 2011 (baseline) and the springs during the following years (2012, 2013, and 2014). These surveys will enable us to understand how TD-DN interventions are associated with students' engagement with school and learning,

their sense of whether teachers care about them, the amount of effort they are willing to extend on their schoolwork, and their relationships with other students and adults in the school. We propose to use similar versions of the survey for middle and high schools, building on existing surveys long-used by members of the TD-DN team. We anticipate having a core module of questions with two alternative modules that will be fielded with randomly selected subgroups of students in the study schools to lessen the overall length of the survey. Given the size of secondary schools, we will have sufficient power for the analysis.

Our evaluation will provide high quality implementation data and performance feedback and will permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. We will describe and analyze the 1) implementation fidelity of the four design components of the TD-DN model (see "TD-DN Turnaround Design" in section A) in the study schools including the influence of the school context, service design, intensity of intervention offering, and dosage for students; 2) the student and teacher support contrast between the TD-DN and control schools, and 3) implementation lessons and best practices for replication and scale-up. Data sources for this analysis include a *longitudinal implementation survey* administered to principals, counselors, and teachers in the TD-DN and control schools, at baseline (pre-implementation) and at annual follow-up periods (end of school year), collecting data on school context and organizational climate, perspectives on teaching, curriculum and instruction, work environment, and the presence of other related programs implemented in each school. In the TD-DN schools, we will obtain additional data on the roles and services provided by CIS and City Year, through program records kept by these organizations and through supplemental surveys of program staff/volunteers.

We also propose to conduct case studies with a sample of 2 to 4 school districts and approximately 10 to12 TD- DN schools to: identify best practices for analyzing early warning indicator data, linking it to specific interventions, and coordinating services among providers; provide information for replication; provide additional formative feedback; and provide more in-depth monitoring and analysis of implementation fidelity, including challenges and solutions and practical lessons learned for program modification/adaptation in different settings with different at-risk student populations. We will select some sites to capture the range of program variation and others to show high levels of success. For these *"best practice" case studies*, we will combine prospective data from surveys (of school staff, programs, and students) and records data with more in-depth on-site interviews, focus groups, and observations to understand effective practices and develop materials that support replication. Data sources for the case studies include in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted on-site annually with school administrators, teachers, and program staff (TD, CIS, CY) and other key stakeholders; and focus groups with parents and students to understand the program-as-experienced, the perceived benefits, and recommendations for improvement. Structured observations of program implementation will also be conducted by members of the evaluation team.

The evaluation plan will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings. The data described above will also allow us to describe the nature of the interventions provided, the staffing arrangements, the types of training provided to staff, the challenges encountered in implementation, and promising responses.

The proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the evaluation effectively. Our proposed budget includes $5 million for the evaluation, which based on the

third party evaluator's experience evaluating secondary school and student support interventions, will be sufficient to carry out the proposed work.

Our proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and does not involve the program developer/implementer in evaluating program impacts. MDRC, in partnership with ICF, will be responsible for the evaluation. The evaluation team will seek the advice of the program team on relevant aspects of the design to make sure the logic model of the evaluation is appropriately assessed and that study procedures are feasible within the study schools. MDRC will have the final decision-making authority on the evaluation; findings will be widely distributed to the public through MDRC's web site (which had nearly 1,000,000 publication downloads in 2009), in public presentations, and in peer-reviewed journal articles; and MDRC will prepare a restricted use file for other researchers to further analyze the data.

E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale

Capacity to Achieve Desired Scale During Grant Period

Talent Development-Diplomas Now seeks to scale its turnaround model to 60 low-performing middle and high schools that meet the persistently lowest-achieving schools definition, and reach approximately 57, 000 students per year. These schools will be located in 14 school districts that are official partners on the project (see Appendix A). Our district partners are in 11 states and the District of Columbia, enabling us to scale beyond the regional level during the grant period. Year 1 will be used as a planning year. Twenty of the 60 schools will begin implementing the model in Year 2, and an additional 20 in Year 3. These 40 randomly selected schools will take part in the formal third-party evaluation. The final set of 20 schools will be strategically added in the fourth and fifth years of the project to complete feeder patterns.

The official non-profit partners in this application - Talent Development, City Year, and Communities In Schools - have demonstrated success in scaling interventions.

Each of the partnering school districts has already begun (or will begin by September 2010) the implementation or planning process for launching a TD-DN school. Since TD-DN non-profit partners operate in all of these districts, we will be able to call upon an established infrastructure of experienced personnel to lead the planning and training, provide the implementation support, and enable the capacity building needed to implement and sustain the model with fidelity at the scale projected. In addition, all three organizations have recently worked with leading management consulting firms (e.g., Bridgespan, Bain, Deloitte, and McKinsey) that specialize in helping non-profits develop capacities to scale.

The TD-DN model conducts extensive year-long preparation and training for each new school. Local TD, CIS and CY staff working in new turnaround schools visit at least one existing site to gain a deeper understanding of the model and attend a summer training institute for leadership teams. Lead staff members conduct multiple full-day trainings with teachers and administrators at each school before and throughout the school year to ensure strong and coordinated launches.

Most importantly, the TD-DN model places an integrated team of support personnel in each school. An on-site TD Turnaround Manager works closely with the school administration to oversee and support the implementation of the comprehensive school reforms, school-wide attendance and behavior programs, and the early warning indicator and intervention system. A fulltime, onsite CY Program Manager oversees the daily execution of CY services as well as the ongoing management and professional development of the teams of 8 to 20 corps members in each school. CIS assigns a trained On-site Coordinator to each turnaround school to help the

school leadership team identify and address students with the greatest social, emotional, and health needs. These three lead staff members serve on the school leadership team and meet weekly with school leaders to share information, evaluate progress and keep the turnaround effort on track. Formal reviews of site progress, implementation, and data are conducted quarterly, using common benchmark rubrics, and are shared with local and national support staff.

Capacity to Scale After the Grant Period and Feasibility of Replicating Successfully

In all partner districts, the infrastructure is in place to scale beyond the schools involved during the grant period. This infrastructure includes experienced local leadership, staff to support growth, private sector champions and strong district relationships (highlighted in Appendix H). Our explicit goal, over time, is to work with school districts to either directly turn around all of their low graduation rate high schools and their feeder middle schools, or to develop state and district capacity to replicate the core features of the TD-DN model, including a multi-tiered student support system driven by early warning indicators.

Existing infrastructure is also in place to bring the TD-DN model to additional school districts beyond our existing formal partners. CY and CIS are in 5 and 27 additional states, respectively and both CY and CIS have expansion plans. TD's current scale plan is designed to work with 50 to 75 additional schools nationwide beyond those in this proposal. Thus, over time we will be able to project the TD-DN model broadly.

Initial reports from the schools and districts implementing the TD-DN model suggest high user satisfaction. Nelson Reyes, principal of the Feltonville School of Arts & Sciences in Philadelphia, commented: "I don't think we would have made AYP without these extra supports [Diplomas Now]. I don't think we would have had a dramatic decrease in suspensions without these extra supports." Paul Vallas, Superintendent of the Recovery School District of Louisiana,

stated: "[Diplomas Now] takes three of the best not-for-profit school support intervention programs, brings them together, coordinates their efforts and delivers the type of interventions and support in a much more cost efficient, much more coordinated way… We are going to work with the program to identify the elements that are replicable district-wide…Our goal is to have a Diplomas Now component in all of our schools."

Estimate of Costs

The cost per student for the TD-DN model is anticipated to decrease during the grant period from approximately $897 to $606 per year. This decrease will occur as schools build capacity and therefore require less on-site support. Of the $606 cost per student per year, we anticipate 90%, or $547, to directly support operations in schools, with the remaining $58 per student paying for the centralized capacities needed to deliver the model with excellence. The cost to provide the TD-DN model to 100,000, 250,000 and 500,000 students is estimated to be $494, $483 and $479 per student per year, respectively. These figures include the anticipated funding requirements for centralized capacities (which equal 4.7% of the total cost at 500,000 students). While some of the operating costs of the model will be supplemented through i3 funding (to entice districts to participate in a randomized study and strategically create feeder patterns), the majority of the costs will be funded by district support through School Improvement Grants, Title I, Race to the Top and other district dollars and private sector investments.

Mechanisms to Broadly Disseminate Project Information

TD-DN considers its model an open source innovation and intends to disseminate information about it broadly. TD-DN has already found several successful methods of media outreach, including creating a documentary video that details the story of the collaboration. TD-

DN leaders have spoken at prominent conventions, education events, and congressional briefings and hearings to promote their work among decision-makers and thought leaders. For example, TD-DN conducted a congressional briefing in September 2009 and TD-DN leaders spoke recently at the American Federation of Teachers Secondary School Design Advisory Panel. In April, Dr. Robert Balfanz spoke to the Senate HELP Committee during a hearing on ESEA Reauthorization where the TD-DN model was highlighted (see Appendix H for senate testimony). TD-DN has also received positive press coverage, increasing awareness of the model's success. In addition to multiple regional and local articles, TD-DN was highlighted in "Diplomas Now Offers Potential Dropouts Lots of Help", a cover story in the December 19th edition of *Education Week.*

Other tactics integral to the TD-DN dissemination strategy include: 1) a national visitors program to proactively inform administrators, policy experts and thought leaders; 2) the Diplomas Now web site highlighting information about the model design and impact; and 3) quarterly press releases and national impact reports that combine data with testimonials from students and school partners.

F. Sustainability

Resources and Support to Operate Project Beyond the Length of the Grant

The ability of the Talent Development-Diplomas Now model to operate, be sustained and scale beyond the length of the grant is based on four factors. **First, TD-DN has the financial resources to continue its operations and expand beyond the time of the Validation grant**. Through a combination of private sector investments and public education and other federal funding, the TD-DN model is sustainable through a diverse funding portfolio. **Most notably, the**

PepsiCo Foundation recently committed $6 million, the full 20% match, in support of the TD-DN i3 application. This investment is on top of an initial $5 million grant in 2008 that PepsiCo made to TD-DN. Deloitte Consulting has provided TD–DN with $200,000 in pro-bono consulting and will continue to support the collaboration. School Loop has committed a free software license (valued at $475,000 per year in addition to $750,000 in development resources) for its early warning indicator and teacher/student support program for up to 100 schools. Pearson Education is providing in-kind support for the use of its Prevent early warning indicator and tracking system that will be available to TD-DN schools. (See Appendix D for commitment letters.)

Individually, TD-DN partners also have vast experience in raising money from diverse sources. Among the more than 180,000 social change organizations founded within the last 30 years, City Year is one of only 21 that have been able to sustain revenues in excess of $20M. CY's experience in fundraising from both the private sector and AmeriCorps provides consistent and reliable sources of funding. In 2008-09, CY raised $58.1M, including $32.6 million in private sector investments (including sponsorships from 110 corporations and foundations) and $18.2 million through the competitive AmeriCorps process. City Year has also built strategic national partnerships with Aramark, Bank of America, Cisco, Comcast, CSX, Pepsi, Timberland, T-Mobile, Walmart and Deloitte. CY has received five consecutive four-star evaluations from Charity Navigator, placing it in the top 4% of non-profit organizations for "executing its mission in a fiscally responsible way." CY is a five-time recipient of Fast Company's Social Capitalist Award.

The CIS network is financially strong and sustainable as well. Local revenues to support CIS' effectiveness in supporting targeted students in grades K–12 have increased 25 percent, to

$205 million, since 2004. CIS corporate and non-profit partnerships are widespread. These include United Way, AT&T, Costco, Walmart, JP Morgan Chase, Capital One, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. CIS received the Charity Navigator three star rating and maintains the BBB Wise Giving Alliance seal of approval.

Additionally, Talent Development has secured funding from multiple foundations-including the Carnegie Corporation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and AT&T.

Second, the TD-DN partners have a long record of building public-private, multi-sector coalitions to support effective social innovations. Already, three state departments of education have signed on as partners (See Appendix D for support letters). Through our work with the National Governors Association Dropout Prevention and School Turnaround grant winners, TD-DN has strong relationships with six additional states. Talent Development has a close working relationship with both the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and is partnering with both on secondary school reform initiatives. For example, The Chicago Talent Development High School, a new TD-DN start-up charter school, is a collaboration between TD and the AFT, IFT, CFT and SEIU unions, which plans to expand to multiple schools in Chicago and throughout the Midwest (see Appendix D for support letter). In Philadelphia, much of the foundational work with early warning indicators stemmed from a longstanding relationship with the Philadelphia Education Fund, which now provides implementation support to TD schools (see Appendix D for support letter). City Year has also played a leadership role in building support for national service through the Voices for National Service and ServiceNation coalitions.

Third, the TD-DN model has a high return on investment (ROI) for districts that will encourage them to continue implementation after the grant period expires. To help districts

and states place the costs of TD-DN model in context, we commissioned a short-term and long-term ROI analysis from Deloitte. Deloitte's analysis showed that in a typical high school with an entering ninth grade of 500 students, of which 260 would become dropouts (52% of the starting class), the turnaround model would lower the number of dropouts to 115, a reduction of more than 55%. This is consistent with moving the graduation rate 29 points, from 48% to 77%, over four years. Over a five year period, this school would have over 320 additional graduates resulting in a positive lifetime net contribution to society of more than $74M (net present value) (Sum et al., 2009) Other benefits include: increases in civic engagement, social service involvement, and teacher satisfaction, a reduction in security costs at schools, and decreased remediation costs for students.

TD-DN recognizes the importance to schools and districts of realizing short-term as well as long-term returns. Below are some examples of how TD-DN creates short term financial value for districts in addition to raising student attainment:

- A recent survey of over 40,000 teachers (Scholastic & The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) identified key factors in retaining good teachers: supportive leadership, time for teacher collaboration, access to high quality teaching resources, safe building conditions, and relevant professional development. TD-DN addresses all of these factors, and by doing so reduces costs associated with teacher turnover, which The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates at $12,500 per teacher.
- TD-DN anticipates it can help schools realize significant savings by dramatically reducing the number of students in need of repeating a grade. Based on conservative estimates, TD-DN could save schools over $290,000 per middle school and $1.3 million per high school per year.

- The TD-DN model increases attendance rates, in some cases by as much as 14 percentage points. Since attendance influences many federal and state funding streams, TD-DN can help schools and districts secure or re-capture financial resources lost due to poor student attendance. (See Appendix H for more detail on ROI analysis.)

Fourth, the TD-DN model meets a clear and compelling national need that will exist beyond the grant. Turning around the lowest performing secondary schools will be a central focus of ESEA re-authorization. The Graduation for All Act of 2009 (HR 4122), for example, introduced in December 2009 by Rep. Miller, chairman of the House Education and Labor committee, would provide $2 billion per year in competitive grants to turn around the nation's lowest performing schools. The legislation directly supports key components of the TD-DN model, including partnering with nonprofit organizations to implement school turnaround strategies, combining coursework with academic and social support services, and implementing early warning data systems. Senate bills, including the Graduation Promise Act, Success in the Middle and Keeping PACE, do the same. While it is not possible to predict the outcome of ESEA reauthorization, strong backing from the House, Senate, and the Administration to focus on turning around the lowest performing secondary schools, and their embrace of key components of the TD-DN model in their initial proposals, suggests that federal support for such efforts will continue.

Incorporating the Project into the Ongoing work of the Eligible Applicant

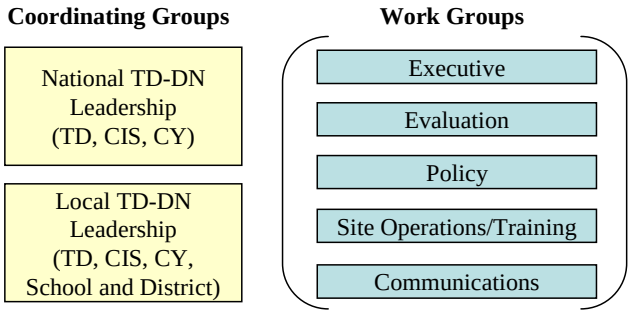
TD, CY and CIS are each committed to the success of the TD-DN model, viewing the partnership as critical to meeting each organization's core goals of keeping students on track to high school graduation and post-secondary success (see Appendix A for letters of commitment).

Each partner has integrated its core programs into the TD-DN model so that the validation of this project, with the associated findings and benefits, will be directly incorporated into the ongoing strategy of each organization. With TD providing whole school reform, CY providing its Whole School, Whole Child model and CIS providing its integrated student support model, each organization contributes what it does best to the collaboration in a way that makes the partnership greater than the sum of its parts. It also enables each organization to better achieve its own core mission. TD's central mission is to provide solutions that enable all students to graduate high school prepared for college, career, and civic life. As such, scaling a validated turnaround model for the nation's most challenged middle and high schools is fundamental to achieving this goal.

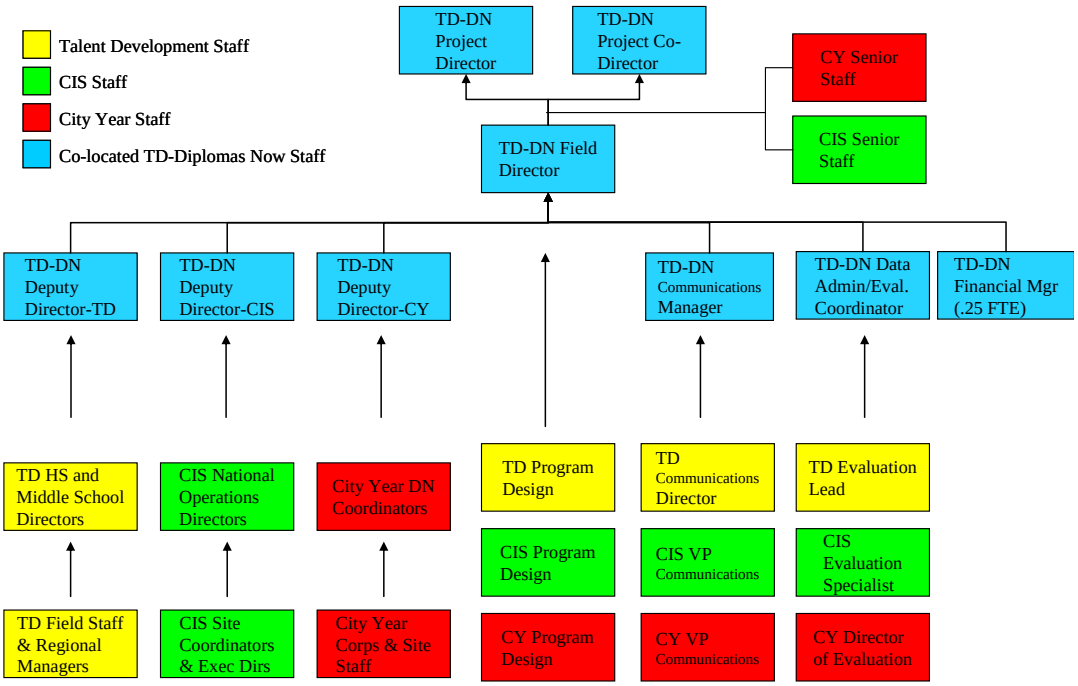
G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

The collaboration has a coherent management structure that leverages the quality and nationally recognized experience of each organization's existing leadership and management structures, while building dedicated strategic capacity to ensure high quality implementation and sustainability of the TD-DN model as it grows. The TD-DN operating structure includes executive, operations/implementation, communications and evaluation teams with local management teams consisting of leaders from all three partners and the school district:

- National management team and working groups with staff from each organization
  - Scheduled bi-weekly conference calls
  - More frequent informal calls and email communication
- Integrated work teams to coordinate and share best practices
- Deep and multi-faceted local connections via local affiliates and boards



Talent Development-Diplomas Now i3 Organization Chart



As the TD-DN model grows to a larger scale, operations will be managed by a dedicated team housed at Johns Hopkins University (JHU). This team ensures the day-to-day operations of TD-DN coordinating the implementation, communications, data collection, and grant reporting functions for the collaborative (see Appendix H for position descriptions). The TD-DN management structure will ensure the project achieves the key milestones described below.

Timelines and Milestone for Talent Development – Diplomas Now implementation

	Year 1 (planning year)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Implementation and Sustainability	• Meet with LEA partners to secure Year 2 schools through 1003g, district, i3 and private funding (e.g., PepsiCo fdn) • Work with MDRC to determine schools through random selection. • Begin planning process for Year 2 schools	• TD-DN enters 20 randomly-selected new schools reaching 19,500 students • 20 control schools continue alternative strategies for improvement • Work with LEA partners to secure Year 3 schools through 1003g, district, i3 and private funding	• TD-DN enters 20 additional randomly-selected schools • Add 20 additional control schools • Total 40 TD-DN and 40 control schools now participating in randomized study reaching 38,750 students	• TD-DN works with LEA partners to secure 10 additional schools to complete feeder patterns • Total 50 TD-DN schools, 40 in randomized study, TD-DN reaching 48,000 students	• TD-DN works with LEA partners to secure 10 additional schools to complete feeder patterns • Total 60 TD-DN schools, 40 in randomized study TD-DN reaching 57,000 students • Secure ongoing support
Communications /Training	• Conduct press outreach to announce expansion of TD-DN through i3 • Conduct TD-DN site visit for Yr 2 schools • Summer training for Yr 2 TD-DN operations teams • Develop/execute integrated outreach plan	• Conduct policy/ media briefings on TD-DN • Conduct TD-DN site visit for Yr 3 schools • Summer training and expansion visit for all operations teams • Develop and execute integrated communications plan	• Policy/media briefings • Conduct TD-DN site visit for Yr 4 schools • Summer training and expansion visit for all TD-DN teams • Communications plan – incl. TD-DN white paper, congressional briefing	• Policy and media briefings • Conduct TD-DN site visit for Yr 5 schools • Summer training and expansion visit for all operations teams • Communications plan – incl. results. updated video and collateral	• Policy/media briefings • Summer training for all TD-DN operations teams • Communication s plan – incl. preliminary evaluation results report
Management	• Hire TD-DN Field Director, Grant Manager and three Deputy Directors • Bi-weekly calls and bi-monthly retreats	• Hire TD-DN, Data Administrator, Comm. Manager. • Bi-weekly calls and bi-monthly retreats • Begin evaluation study	• Evaluation study update • Bi-weekly calls and bi-monthly retreats • Staff and management evaluations and feedback	• Evaluation study update • Bi-weekly calls and bi-monthly retreats • Staff and management evaluations and feedback	• Bi-weekly calls and bi-monthly retreats • Evaluations and feedback • Complete evaluation study (pending cohort grad results)

Qualifications of Project Directors and Leadership

The TD-DN management plan is led by some of the most established leaders in education reform in the nation. TD-DN is led by Dr. Robert Balfanz, one of the nation's foremost authorities on the high school dropout crisis and turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Dr. Balfanz is co-director of the Everyone Graduates Center and a research scientist at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at JHU. He has conducted foundational research on the nature, extent, and location of the nation's dropout crisis, secondary school reform, and early warning indicators, and is Co-Operator of the Baltimore Talent Development High School, an Innovation High School run in collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS). Dr. Balfanz will bring this experience to leading the TD-DN i3 validation project.

Dr. Douglas MacIver will serve as co-director on the project. Dr. MacIver has led the Talent Development Middle grades program for the last 14 years, and is published widely on comprehensive secondary school reform. He is the Co-Operator of two BCPS schools, Baltimore Civitas and March Middle School, which is undergoing school turnaround and will become the Baltimore Talent Development Middle School at March. Drs. Balfanz and MacIver combine extensive research with hands on experience managing complex school turnaround efforts.

Joining Dr. Balfanz on the Diplomas Now Senior Leadership Team are Michael Brown, the Co-Founder and CEO of City Year and Daniel Cardinali, President of CIS. For his work developing City Year, Michael Brown has been awarded several distinctions, most notably the Reebok Human Rights Award, and four honorary degrees. He was named one of America's Best Leaders by US News and World Report in 2006 and an Executive of the Year by the NonProfit Times for his leadership role in ServiceNation and the passage of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in 2009. Dan Cardinali has led CIS to embrace evidence-based Integrated Student Supports (ISS), launched an ambitious growth strategy, raised ISS to national prominence, and has stewarded a national research initiative and rigorous accreditation of affiliates. He has been

honored as a 2007 Annie E. Casey Children and Families Fellow and is a Trustee of America's Promise. He has testified six times on the high school dropout crisis on Capitol Hill.

Each organization dedicates staff to TD-DN to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the project. This staff is a highly experienced team that includes former school and district leaders, public policy experts, management consultants, and research and design experts (see Appendix C for resumes). During the past two years, this leadership and management team has proven they can effectively work together to implement the TD-DN model and significantly accelerate student performance.

Qualifications of the Independent Evaluators

The experimental study of program impacts will be directed by Dr. Fred Doolittle, Vice President and Director of MDRC's Policy Research and Evaluation Department. Since joining MDRC in 1986, he has led evaluations of employment programs for youth who have dropped out of high school and evaluations of elementary and secondary school reforms. He has served as leader or senior reviewer of more than 20 national, multi-site randomized field trials and other evaluations at MDRC. Recently, Dr. Doolittle completed two IES projects on which he served as project director or co-director: IES's Reading Professional Development Evaluation and the Evaluation of Enhanced Academic Instruction in After-School Programs, both randomized control trials. The author of many publications, Dr. Doolittle has served on the faculties of the Summer Institute of Education Sciences Training on Randomized Clinical Trials, the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard (public policy analysis) and the Yale School of Management (program evaluation) and is an advisor to grantees of the W.T. Grant Foundation on research design and implementation. Dr. Doolittle will be assisted by Dr. Pei Zhu, a senior research

associate with substantial experience in conducting randomized experiments of education programs.

Dr. Heather Clawson, Principal at ICF, will direct the implementation study. She has 13 years of experience as a program evaluator for school-based, after-school, and juvenile justice programs, with expertise in managing and conducting program evaluations, providing evaluation training and technical assistance, and using state-of-the-art statistical techniques to analyze demographic, program, and cost data for this project. Dr. Clawson is the project director and co-Principal Investigator for the national evaluation of CIS and served as the project director for the evaluation of CIS of Texas. Additionally, she is the Principal Investigator for the evaluation of Amachi Texas, a randomized controlled trial study of a mentoring program for children impacted by incarceration.