



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

AASA/TDS Networked Improvement Community (NIC)

I. Background:

Talent Development Secondary (TDS) and AASA, The School Superintendents Association, have embarked on a unique partnership to support local districts in meeting their ESSA requirements to transform their 5% lowest performing secondary schools. We will partner with up to 20 districts and 40 schools over a four-year period in a collaborative learning community using the evidence-based TDS framework. The framework involves the establishment of a core set of evidence-based strategies that, collectively, have proven effective in substantially improving high-needs secondary schools. They are:

- 1) small learning communities with teacher teams;
- 2) district core curricula supported with acceleration curricula as needed, with embedded professional development and instructional support;
- 3) development of an Early Warning System (EWS) which monitors all students on the key predictive indicators – attendance, behavior and course performance - and intervenes when students signal they are off track to graduating and prepared for college and career;
- 4) a “Can-Do” culture and climate based on clear platforms for both student and staff input and recognition; and
- 5) clear pathways to post-secondary success and the world of work.

While some of these elements are frequently in place at many schools, they are not often interwoven into a strategic package of evidence-based structures and practices. TDS, in partnership with AASA, will provide the training, the technical support, and the networked learning platform to take on this challenge with a proven framework over the coming four years. The following information will enable both interested districts and AASA/TDS to assess if a district and its targeted schools are a good match for this effort. We will start accepting applications on Monday, November 12, 2018 all the way through the final date of March 30, 2019. Within two weeks of submitting, we will notify the district about the status of its submission and may need to ask clarifying questions in some cases. The following information is required for us to make an effective assessment of your district’s capacity to meet the requirements of the project.

II. Basics

- a. District Name: _____
- b. District Superintendent: _____
- c. Point Person - phone and email: _____
- d. District Address: _____
- e. District Enrollment: _____
- f. Number of Schools in District: _____
- g. Number of Schools on the 5% Lowest Performing List: _____
- h. Schools Proposed for Participation in NIC (only middles and high schools):
 - 1. A. (name) _____ B. (enrollment) _____ C. Upload school info/report card data
 - 2. A. (name) _____ B. (enrollment) _____ C. Upload school info/report card data
 - 3. A. (name) _____ B. (enrollment) _____ C. Upload school info/report card data
 - 4. A. (name) _____ B. (enrollment) _____ C. Upload school info/report card data
 - 5. A. (name) _____ B. (enrollment) _____ C. Upload school info/report card data

III. Timing

- a. Can you identify schools for orientation by March 30? Yes ___ No ___
If no, please explain.
- b. Can you facilitate orientations for district leaders, selected school leaders, selected school staff and community members by April 30? Yes ___ No ___
If no, please explain.
- c. Can you confirm school participation (including support from targeted school leadership team and staff) and execute a contract with TDS by May 30? Yes ___ No ___
If no, please explain.
- d. Can you commit to a 2-3-day off-site kickoff training in early July involving two district leaders, and up to five school leaders (principal, assistant principal, identified STF, district provided coach in Math and ELA)? Yes ___ No ___
If no, please explain.
- e. Can the participating schools commit to a planning/training/capacity-building period in the first year of the multi-year partnership and then can they commit to multiple implementation years? Yes ___ No ___
If no, please explain.

IV. Evidence Based Framework: Components, Structures and Strategies - participating schools and districts in the AASA/TDS CSI Secondary School NIC commit to implementing a common evidence-based framework and the core components of that framework are shown below. For each component please identify: a) if it is currently in place; b) if it isn't but your team is committed to implementing it; and c) what challenges do you anticipate in implementing this?

- a. Small Learning Communities/Teacher Teams – interdisciplinary teacher teams sharing a small and manageable cohort of students all year with common planning time, supported by distributed leadership. This includes a 9th Grade Success Academy as well as career-themed small learning communities or academies in 10th-12th grades supported by industry mentors, site visits and summer internships between 11th and 12th grades.
- b. Traditional evidence-based curricula in core courses, and acceleration curricula in math and ELA provided in a double-period in the fall semester for students that are 2-3 years behind and extra help lab for those that are more than 3 years behind to prepare students to access and succeed in on-grade level courses in the spring semester.
- c. School schedules that enable teacher teaming and acceleration courses.
- d. Social-emotional and school success courses in middle grades and freshmen year of high school (at least 45 minutes several times per week):
- e. EWS (Early Warning System) that affords weekly or bi-weekly meeting with access to ABCs (attendance, behavior and math and ELA course grades) for each school and each teacher team at each school.
- f. Strategy for finding and supporting tutors/mentors for tier II support and at least one case manager for tier III supports. (If you will be using City Year Corps members or Communities In Schools site coordinators/case managers, you will receive special consideration in the RFA process).
- g. This evidence-based framework and its set of core components, structure, and strategies is aligned with the needs of our participating secondary school(s), and fits within our state's ESSA requirements? Yes _____ No _____

If "No" is there an element(s) that is problematic?

V. Implementation Support Staffing

- a. For this partnership to work, there must be a TDS/District co-selected TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) to serve as STF (School Transformation Facilitator) at each participating school. The STF will function as a key support staff to the principal and school leadership team to help develop understanding and buy-in; provide customization for the school context; and implement the evidence-based framework with fidelity. He/she will receive ongoing professional development and support from TDS facilitators for the duration of the project while remaining on the district payroll with benefits to build the capacity of the local talent in the school and the district at large.
- b. There must also be a full-time district-supported Math and ELA coach at each school. These two coaches will spend no less than 70% of their time engaged in direct support to teachers and will be working in partnership with TDS instructional facilitators on a weekly basis to guide and support reflective instructional practice.

We will be able to provide this implementation support staffing? Yes _____ No _____

If "No," what are the barriers?

VI. Network Learning Meeting Structure

- a. Superintendent and/or designee attends AASA/TDS Precon annually at the National Conference on Education (NCE)
- b. Principal(s), Assistant Principal(s), STF and district coaches attend annual summer conference with TDS.
- c. STF meets twice a year as part of a network of school transformation facilitators
- d. Principal joins Principals Network and in addition to summer conference meets once a year in rotating locations as well as participates in bi-monthly conference calls/virtual convenings of an hour in length.

We would be able to participate in these Network Learning meetings? Yes _____ No _____

If no, please explain.

VII. Cost:

Our best estimates are that the planning year and all the conferences will cost \$150K per school and that the program years (II – IV), will cost between \$250 – 300K depending on materials purchased. These costs include training, ongoing management and technical assistance, instructional support, conference fees, data reports, evaluation, and materials as needed. Please let us know if you can meet this requirement through district and state ESSA resources or some other means. Also let us know how you intend to ensure this year that money is set aside in your district budget for next fiscal year to support this partnership.

VIII. Barriers:

What additional challenges do you see for your school community, district and stakeholders to implementing this evidence-based approach to school transformation, and how do you plan to address them? Please use this final section to describe any other barriers that you have not already identified.

THANK YOU!

For more information, visit <http://www.tdschools.org/aasa-tds-networked-improvement-community/>

If you need to speak to someone directly about this opportunity or this application process, please do not hesitate to reach out directly to Charles Hiteshew, Talent Development Secondary, Executive Director at chiteshew@tdschools.org; or 301-956-3986.