

NEW CASTLE COUNTY VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Partnership Zone

Howard High School of Technology Transformational Intervention Plan

Introduction:

Howard High School of Technology in Wilmington, DE, prepares students for immediate employment and college by providing state-of-the-art career and technical training combined with a rigorous academic curriculum. Howard currently serves 850 students in grades 9-12, and offers 13 different career programs of study from which students may choose. As Delaware's only urban career and technical high school, Howard strives to meet the needs of all students who enroll. Eighth grade students from five different public school districts and dozens of private and parochial schools in the surrounding area submit applications to attend Howard. Students are selected through an admissions process that considers their career program choice and the current capacity of those programs.

The student population falls into these demographics: 74% African American, 14% White, 11% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. Sixty-one percent of the student body is considered low socio-economic status. More than half of the students who accept admission to Howard have not met grade level math and/or reading standards on state assessments. By contrast, Howard has a high graduation rate (97%), an enviable daily student attendance rate (95%), and a low serious infraction rate. Students are committed learners, and the school has won national awards for creative service-learning initiatives that involve students in meaningful community service projects related to the career skills they have acquired. In response to the analysis of our trend data and recognizing the educational strengths and challenges of the community, the components associated with the transformational model were identified as the best model. The Howard Transformational Intervention Plan is one that accepts the challenges that currently exist at Howard and designs bold and meaningful steps to reignite the torch of this institution that has a historic legacy in Wilmington, Delaware, and the larger community it serves.

Improving student achievement is the centerpiece of Howard's Transformational plan. Just as important, the plan includes strategies to improve the retention and graduation rate, and focuses on the specific needs of every student so each can reach her/his full potential. A successful outcome of the plan's full implementation after two years would be to have a post-graduation pathway for every student that builds on the strength of Howard's career and technical platform.

The four cornerstones of the plan are:

- Area of Focus 1: Instructional reform and teacher and leader effectiveness
- Area of Focus 2: Instructional practice and extended learning time
- Area of Focus 3: Flexible operating conditions
- Area of Focus 4: Mechanisms for community and parent engagement

This plan serves as a blueprint for Howard's transformation. As such, it is understood that this document will be continuously revised, and reshaped over the two year Partnership Zone period. Plan changes will be based on the identified needs of students from collected and analyzed data, and in collaboration with the Howard administrative team, Howard faculty, the New Castle County Vocational Technical Education Association, families/community members, and outside experts. As a blueprint to guide our efforts, more specific strategies, related activities, itemized budgets and plan responsibilities will be developed. The plan will be monitored through our district's established Balanced Scorecard (BSC) tool and Project Management Oversight Committee (PMOC) process.

A narrative of each cornerstone follows. Beyond that, specific strategies are listed that constitute our work plan, and resources are listed and described.

Instructional Reform and Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

Reform is the process by which a system is examined and improved. The Howard Partnership Zone Plan creates a clear pathway to improve student achievement. The curriculum audit will inform final decisions for the 2011-2012 school year plan. In order to improve test scores, teaching must be aligned and meaningful. Curriculum auditing is a quality control and benchmarking tool. In order to maximize student performance, three elements of quality control must be present in the classroom: (a) written curriculum which is aligned to (b) tested curriculum, which (c) becomes the taught curriculum as designed. If it is discovered that an "unconnected" curriculum is being delivered, a significant cause for decline in tested student performance will be revealed and the training plan for teachers will have to be modified accordingly.

Individual pockets of great teaching gain synergy when teachers collaborate and focus on the components of a successful lesson; design integrated lessons that make learning relevant to students; and interpret data spreadsheets that reflect performance of students. Profound professional interactions of this level require a master schedule that affords students more opportunity to learn and respects teachers' time to collaborate. To enhance the power of this teacher collaboration, Small Learning Communities, built upon common planning time, will become the vehicle by which the changes in this document are delivered. To encourage the positive citizenship of students in their small learning community, the Small Learning Community coordinator will create a student incentive system.

The key to successful Small Learning Communities (SLC) is common teacher planning time. It is within this common planning time that teachers will implement an early warning system to pinpoint students who face academic struggles, that an advisor/advisee structure to enhance student/teacher relationships can be activated, that teachers can delve into lesson design utilizing Learning Focused Strategies, that student work can be examined in order to identify students individual strengths and needs, and that student data can be examined in detail. SLCs will begin with a 9th grade Freshmen Transition Academy whose emphasis will be to personalize the team concept so that teachers are closely aware of student academic progress. SLCs will expand into 10th grade focused on the student's selected career area. Clusters of similar career areas will allow teachers to align and integrate instruction in those cluster groups, making learning more purposeful for students. The 10th grade career clusters will allow both academic and career teachers to work in a relevant system to deliver their lessons. SLCs allow teachers the common planning time to implement an advisor/advisee program that focuses directly on connecting students to learning objectives, integrating core and career content.

Well documented research shows that teaching and learning outcomes for students greatly improve when a school becomes a community—that is when everyone works together to collaboratively search for and resolve problems in their schools. The role of professional development in promoting teacher quality and increasing student achievement is also clearly evident. Cultures that create conditions for learning are supportive, safe, inclusive, nonthreatening, free of blame and negativity, enthusiastic, trusting, open, problem-solving oriented, and accepting of challenges.

There will be a multi-pronged approach to improving the professional learning conditions at Howard High School of Technology. Teacher leaders will facilitate relevant, professional learning time. To make targeted achievement gains, as measured by reading and mathematics scores on DCAS, the plan has been designed primarily around two nationally acclaimed programs and services: Focus on Results (FOR), the professional development provider for the Vision 2015 Network, and Learning Focus Strategies (LFS), an intense instructional procedures system implemented at the classroom level. The LFS Transformation Model is a high-impact, rapid response comprehensive solution that is based on over twenty years of research and results through a balanced emphasis on leadership and instructional practices. Whereas LFS brings the exemplary practices and guidance for consistent and pervasive implementation of these practices, the FOR model provides the larger framework. The FOR Seven Areas of Focus serve as a strategic framework for whole school improvement:

- A. Identify and Implement a School-wide Instructional Focus
- B. Develop Professional Collaboration Teams
- C. Identify, Learn and Use Effective Evidence-Based Teaching Practices
- D. Create a Targeted Professional Development Plan
- E. Re-align Resources
- F. Engage Families and the Community
- G. Create an Internal Accountability System

Both the Focus on Results school improvement process and Learning Focused Strategies instructional system should continue as a priority in every classroom, every day.

Instructional Practice and Extended Learning Time Opportunities

School profile information reveals that 50% of incoming students are performing below state proficiency standards in math. In 2010, 58% of 10th grade students did not meet the state standard in math and 54% did not meet the state standard in reading. One out of every three 9th and 10th grade students is failing his or her math end-of-course district assessment and the same is true for one out of every four students in English. Understanding that expectations for learning outcomes must be rigorous for our students, it is necessary to accept that more time on task, especially in math and reading, will produce more academically proficient students. Extended learning time allows not only for more time, but more focused time.

Extra time allows instruction to be focused on specific student learning needs and can take the form of pre-teaching, remediation, and enrichment. The possibilities for extended time may include: 1) adding a “9th period” offered Monday through Thursday after regular school hours, 2) embedding within the school day an *Academic League* period, and/or 3) creating a Summer Bridge program. Howard will be working with the *Institute for Time and Learning*, winter 2011, to undergo a Time Audit. These findings will inform the selection of the best suited extended learning time option, the curriculum and staff needed, and the process for identifying students.

Early warning systems will target students with high needs using DCAS, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), district common assessment program (inclusive of both common formative and summative measures), and other teacher-created, formative assessments results. In a small learning community structure, teachers will work with the state Data Coaches to engage in weekly dialogue using the district’s Data Talk protocol.

A planning committee will be constituted in January, 2011 to research and develop the Howard Advisor/ Advisee Program. The committee will consist of members of the Design Team, a Howard Guidance Administrator, a district lead counselor, and one Howard counselor. The group will visit exemplary high school Advisory Programs in the region to learn about the planning, communication, professional development, administrative oversight, and other pertinent elements of model Advisement Programs. The committee will meet weekly from January – March, 2011 to develop two viable Advisement Framework options for Howard High School of Technology. The planning committee will present both proposals to the design team at the end of March, 2011.

Flexible Operating Conditions

The transformational model affords Howard sufficient operational flexibility to implement a comprehensive approach to dramatically increase student achievement. Establishing flexible operating conditions is necessary for school-level decisions to be made on the basis of what is best practice for dramatically increasing student achievement. The primary operational changes in this section address key resources involving faculty, time, money and programs, specifically those school operating conditions that include hiring, transferring, and reassigning staff; a redesigned master schedule, use of the planning period; and implementation of the Partnership Zone plan as a condition of employment. The focus of the new schedule will prioritize student learning time and teacher collaboration time. After February, when the newly established Howard Leadership team has been identified, decisions regarding implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this plan will be solidified. Prior to this date, the current district administrative team will continue to serve this role. Likewise, decisions around the flexibility and autonomy of the site-based leadership team and the degree of support from the Partnership Zone Guiding Team will be determined after administrative team is solidified.

The changes to occur at Howard will require teachers who possess a commitment to Howard that includes professional collaboration, intensive implementation of Learning Focused Strategies, and an ability to provide increased learning time, especially for 9th and 10th grade students. NCCVT will create a monetary incentive structure to reward teachers from other district schools who have a proven track record and seek the challenge of improving student achievement in a Partnership Zone school. The transfer in and out of Howard will be based on criteria defined through the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Modifications Document (see page 2). An incentivized system will also be created for those who become teacher-leaders at Howard. Teacher leaders will be selected based on Principal interview with the following criteria in mind:

• academic needs of students, especially at 9th and 10th grade, • academics of math and ELA priorities, • best fit to meet new PZ plan needs, • to achieve school system balance, • certification, • volunteers. A series of action planning meetings dates have been scheduled in January to address and develop the final plan for the transfer in and transfer out starting after February 1 (once the new principal is planned to be in place). The principal position will be posted in December and the district anticipates having the permanent principal in place by February 2011.

Mechanisms for Parent and Community Engagement

Engaging family and community members as partners with the school is a key component to improving student achievement and sustaining high expectations. Parents will be engaged in ways that directly relate to their child's academic progress. Parental knowledge of their child's progress in school and their personal growth, gained in part from their close communication with teachers, helps emphasize the importance of learning. Research suggests that the greatest achievement outcomes are realized when parents provide their high school-aged children with specific types of guidance.

School profile information reveals at least 61% of Howard students are considered low socio-economic status. The negative effects of poverty on student learning are well documented and require internal and external supports to sustain improvement. Families are recognized as a strength-based and not a deficit-based partner. Helping parents to encourage constructive attitudes, habits and skills for their children is the primary objective of successful parent engagement initiatives. In order to focus on a child's progress, an Individualized Graduation Plan will be developed for each Howard student at the beginning of freshman year with active participation from the parent, the student, and a school advisor. All activities (such as student-led annual conferences, demonstrations, school-to-work and post-secondary education planning) for this student-centered initiative could become the work of the school's existing Stenta Career Development Center, with support from a school-based Parent Outreach Coordinator Services program. Family engagement mechanisms will be developed utilizing the existing career program structure, where parents already share common interests.

Strategies for this effort will be built upon the school's current strengths. There already exists a strong sense of community at Howard, where relationships among students, their teachers, the families of the students, the staff, and active volunteers are purposeful. Teachers know their students and have meaningful connections to them. The school has identified a core group of parent leaders who were instrumental in opening Delaware's first Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) within a high school. Howard has a long-standing culture that invites and encourages partnerships within the community, to include community service initiatives, student mentoring, advisory committees, alumni outreach, school-to-work programs, and articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions.

Goal: *Dramatically increase student achievement especially in the areas of reading and math through bold, innovative, and relevant strategies over the two-year Partnership Zone period (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2013)*

Area of Focus 1: Instructional Reform and Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

PZ Year	Strategies	Resources	Process Measures
Winter 10-11 Year 1	1. Hire new principal to be in place February 1, 2011*	Learning Focused Solutions, Inc. consultant contract	-Small Learning Community faculty training completed by August 15, 2011
Year 1	2. Institute a Small Learning Communities structure (emphasizing 9 th , and 10 th)		-3 Learning Focused Strategies modules completed with all staff by February 2011 and at least 2 modules by February 2012
Year 1	3. Provide Small Learning Communities training for all staff.	Focus on Results consultant contract	
Year 1	4. Implement Learning Focused Strategies (LFS) schoolwide		
Year 1	5. Expand partnership with Focus on Results (Vision 2015)		
Year 1	6. Establish a comprehensive professional development plan around LFS.	Phi Delta Kappan Audit	-Phi Delta Kappan audit completed by October 2011
Year 1	7. Audit the alignment between instruction and curriculum	U of D Partnership Agreement for STEM Residency Program	-Principal hired by February 1, 2011
Year 1, 2	8. Establish early warning systems to identify students at risk of failing or of not graduating		-7 additional Focus on Results consultation days contracted for administrators, HILT, and faculty leaders
*Complete Year 1	9. Replace principal; appoint temporary leadership team	U of D Inclusion consultants	-5 STEM graduate students in program/per year
Year 1, 2	10. Utilize a walkthrough tool in conjunction with DPAS II to gauge the levels of implementation related to the instructional focus	U of D Literacy consultant	-2 Teach for America instructors hired by August 2011
Year 1, 2	11. Participate in UD STEM residency program		-Priority list of at-risk 9 th and 10 th grade students identified by June 30 and updated each marking period for specific interventions
Year 1, 2	12. Contract with Teach for America	Teach for America contract	-Train administrators in the proper use of the 5X5 LFS walkthrough tool; conduct 120 walkthroughs
Year 1, 2	13. Review current career programs in light of labor market needs and student interest and make appropriate program changes, modifications, and upgrades.		

<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>2010 Benchmark</u>	<u>2011 Target</u>	<u>2012 Target</u>	<u>2013 Target</u>
SRI lexile score gains	+34	+40	+50	+50
% passing USAP math final exams	69%	70%	75%	80%
% passing USAP English final portfolios	77%	80%	85%	90%
% passing academic course grades	90%	90%	92%	94%
<u>Success Indicators</u>				
% meeting DCAS math standard	42% (DSTP)	35%	45%	55%
% meeting DCAS reading standard	46% (DSTP)	45%	55%	65%
% passing DCAS end-of-course math exam		Field Test	75%	80%
% passing DCAS end-of-course English exam		Field Test	85%	90%
DCAS math scaled score change		Benchmark	TBD	TBD
DCAS reading scaled score change		Benchmark	TBD	TBD
Enrollment retention	77%	80%	85%	90%
Graduation rate	97% (2009)	95%	95%	95%

Note that measures above will be monitored for the school in total as well as for selected subsets determined by student NCLB subgroup, market segment and/or small learning community group.

Area of Focus 2: Instructional Practice and Extended Learning Time

PZ Year	Strategies	Resources	Process Measures		
Year 1, 2	1. Use RTTT data coach to facilitate use of DCAS, USAP, and other data to assist teachers in driving instruction based on student needs	*Small Learning Communities *Reinventing Ninth Grade	-Two data coaches complete 20 hours per week -Advisory program for 9 th grade students implemented by October 15, 2011		
Year 1	2. Utilize best practices to meet individual student learning needs in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) through a Student Case Study approach	District Inclusion Specialist Literacy and Math Coaches	-Summer Learning/Leadership Academy held each July for 100 at-risk students		
Year 1	3. Establish an advisory program that serves to build connections between staff and students	Extended learning time teachers	-Learning and Leadership workshops held 3 times per school year for 50-100 students per session		
Year 1	4. Build intervention period(s) into the master schedule (pre-teaching, remediation, enrichment)	UD Inclusion consultants	-After school extra help sessions scheduled Monday-Thursday from 9/15-4/15		
Year 1, 2	5. Create a Summer Intensive Learning and Leadership Academy that prepares underperforming students for the rigor of 9 th grade		-2-4 literacy and math coaches hired for 25/hours per coach per week (October-April)		
Year 1, 2	6. Plan and implement a series (3) of Learning and Leadership workshops for Ninth and Tenth grade students during the school year		-Training process for teachers to meet the needs of special education students in the general education setting		
Year 1	7. Review, revise and expand the impact of the Quest for Quality program (freshman transition academy)		-Increase the % of special education students placed in the general education classroom settings		
Year 2	8. Identify core and career area content integration opportunities in order to maximize applied learning		-Revise master schedule by August 1, 2011		
Year 1, 2	9. Expand instructional time for 9 th and 10 th grade students ("9 th period," Saturday Academy, Summer Intensive Learning Academy, online courses)				
Year 1	10. Increase the number of literacy and math coaches available to targeted 9 th and 10 th grade students				
<u>Performance Measures</u>		<u>2010 Benchmark</u>	<u>2011 Target</u>	<u>2012 Target</u>	<u>2013 Target</u>
% increase in instructional time (over 2010)				+5%	+10%
Attendance rate		94.8%	95%	95%	95%
Serious infraction rate		.05	.04	.04	.04
Outside suspension rate		.29	.25	.20	.15
<u>Success Indicators</u>					
Same as listed under Area of Focus 1					
Note that measures above will be monitored for the school in total as well as for selected subsets determined by student NCLB subgroup, market segment and/or small learning community group.					

Area of Focus 3: Flexible Operating Conditions

PZ Year	Strategies	Resources	Process Measures
Year 1	1. Redesign the teacher leadership organizational structures and provide monetary incentives for these expanded responsibilities [i.e. Howard Instructional Leadership Team (HILT), Small Learning Community (SLC) Leaders]	Instructional Division Specialists	- teachers participate in transfer plan by April 15, 2011 -Identify teacher leaders by May 2011
Year 1, 2	2. Establish a two-tiered incentive system for Teachers on Assignment to voluntarily transfer to Howard for two years	DOE's Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Branch	-PZ Leadership Team works with outside consultant and local education association to design a master schedule that includes: SLC, professional development time, common planning time, 9 th period, and year-long math, English in 9 th , 10 th grade
Year 1	3. Reassign specialists, teachers, and para-educators to other district schools (voluntarily or involuntarily) to complement the incentive plan	Time and Learning Institute	-Revised master schedule by August 1, 2011
Year 1	4. Redesign the master schedule to allow for increased and targeted learning time		-Small Learning Community coordinator hired by April 15, 2011
Year 1	5. Build capacity for faculty to effectively work within a Small Learning Community structure		-Schedule meetings with DOE and NCCVTEA to discuss the DPAS II Component 5 incentive system
Year 1	6. Create and designate a small learning community coordinator		
Year 2	7. Collaborate with DOE and NCCVTEA to create a system for incentive awards that is transparent and fair		

<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>2010 Benchmark</u>	<u>2011 Target</u>	<u>2012 Target</u>	<u>2013 Target</u>
% 'highly qualified teacher' classes	86%	95%	98%	100%
Average # teaching staff sick/personal days	7.1	6.0	5.0	4.0
<u>Success Indicators</u>				
Same as listed under Area of Focus 1				
Note that measures above will be monitored for the school in total as well as for selected subsets determined by student NCLB subgroup, market segment and/or small learning community group.				

Area of Focus 4: Mechanisms for Community and Parent Engagement

PZ Year	Strategies	Resources	Process Measures
Year 1	1. Revise Summer Home Visit program to meet the needs of students performing below proficiency	Parent Information Center Howard Wellness Center DE Skills Center, AED Department of Labor	-Parent Outreach coord. hired by 6-11
Year 1	2. Increase outreach opportunities for parents to meaningfully participate in the school		- By June 30 each year, Summer Home Visits will be completed for incoming freshmen performing below proficiency in Math and ELA
Year 1	3. Maximize the utilization of the school-based Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC)		-Design parent engagement activities, supports targeted for parents of identified at-risk students
Year 1	4. Create a Parent Outreach Coordinator/Services to build the capacity for faculty and families to work together (especially families whose children are performing below proficiency in Math and ELA, are considered low socio-economic status, have limited English proficiency, and/or have disabilities)		-Parent/Community activities, events held each month (August-March)
Year 1	5. Create specific guidelines for student-school-parent involvement/expectations		-Graduation Plan completed and implemented by August 2012
Year 2	6. Develop a retention/graduation plan for each student that creates a road map for freshman year through post-secondary success		- Target Parent Engagement activities and supports for 9th and 10th grade students performing below proficiency in Math and ELA July 2011 to July 2013
Year 1	7. Coordinate efforts with state and city agencies and non-profits to increase social and mental health services to at-risk students.		- By July 2011, parent training material created on how to interpret DCAS and other assessment data
	8. In coordination with the Howard Wellness Center, provide specific social and mental services to at-risk students.		-Increase number of parents attending activities (including student-led conferences, SLC activities, etc.)
	9. Explore partnerships with AED, DE Skills Center and the Department of Labor to support Howard parents.		- Student-led conferences on progress of Individualized Graduation Plan 2x/year thru Stenta Center

Howard High School of Technology Intervention Plan

Consultant Support	Partnership Zone Scope of Work	Person Responsible
Focus on Results (FOR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Howard Principal and administrative team to help manage the change process. • Work with Instructional Leadership Team to build their capacity as teacher leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supervisor of Instruction ➤ Principal
Institute for Time and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tools and support to conduct a Time Audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assistant Superintendent
Learning Focused Solutions (LFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing professional development focused on high-yield instructional practices. • Coaching and monitoring visits to assist in the consistent implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supervisor of Instruction ➤ Principal
Sharon Walpole, Ph.D., Literacy Consultant, University of Delaware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) literacy support course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Amy Pleet, Inclusion Consultant, University of Delaware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist schools with development of effective inclusionary teaching practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supervisor of Special Education
Peter Gallaher, Proof Points (New Schools for New Leaders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance in systemizing the process for principal recruitment, selection, and placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Superintendent ➤ Assistant Superintendent

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