

Year Three of the Talent Development High School Initiative In Philadelphia: Results from Five Schools

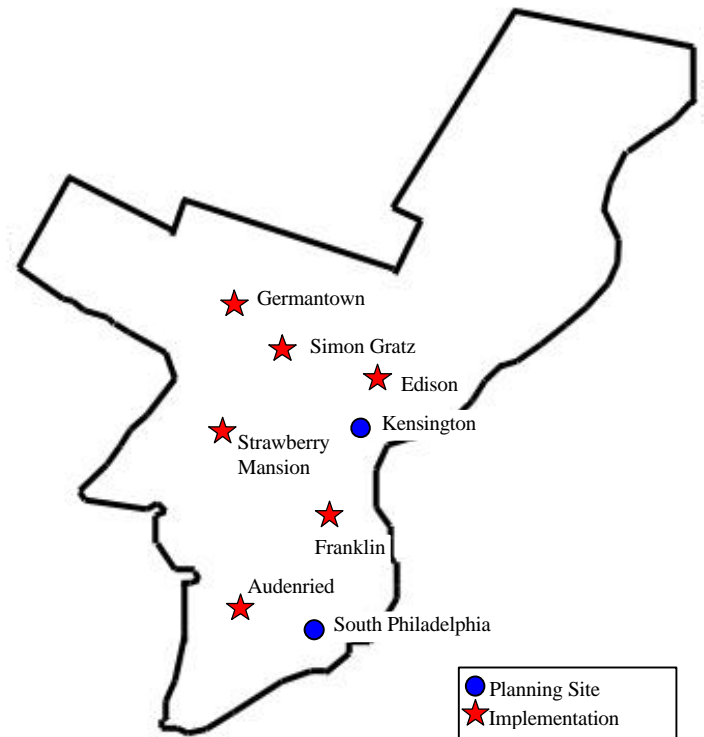
2001-2002

Students show gains in Philadelphia Talent Development High Schools.

Students who attend the five Philadelphia neighborhood high schools that have adopted the Talent Development (TD) comprehensive reform model have shown marked improvement in attendance, standardized test scores, grades, and rates of suspensions. Their rates of arrests and setting school fires are significantly lower than similar schools in the city.

Specifically, results of the initiative show that:

- Schools implementing the model for two or more years have seen their 9th grade attendance improve by fifteen or more percentage points, while the number of students with 90% or more attendance has doubled.
- The number of students to reach the 11th grade in the first two schools to implement Talent Development has nearly doubled.
- Across all five schools, course pass rates are up while suspensions, fires, and arrests are down.
- At Strawberry Mansion High School, once viewed as one of the most troubled schools in the District, students registered a notable 100 point gain in their state math PSSA scores in 2002.



- A substantial number of students have begun to close achievement gaps in both reading and math. Nearly a third of the 9th graders, for example, have gained at least two years in math.

Large, high-poverty urban high schools are extremely resistant to change. It is notable that the Talent Development initiative has achieved these results in what once were considered among the lowest performing schools in the District. For this reason, Talent Development schools are regularly visited by school reformers, journalists, and policymakers from across the country.

Talent Development begins working in three new schools.

Benjamin Franklin and Germantown High Schools began implementation of 9th Grade Academies in 2001, and Audenried High School did the same for the 2002-03 school year. Meanwhile, TD schools started in 1999

are now entering a fourth consecutive year of the program. Kensington and South Philadelphia High Schools are beginning an intensive planning year during 2002-03.

	Planning Year	9 th grade Academy	Upper Grades Courses and Coaching	
			10 th Grade	11 th Grade
Mansion	1998-99	1999-01	2001-02	2002-03
Germantown	2000 -01	2001-02	2002 -03	2002-03
Simon Gratz	1999-00	2000-02	2002-03	
Edison	1998-99	1999-02	2002-03	
Ben Franklin	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	
Audenried	2001-02	2002-03		
Kensington	2002-03			
South Philly	2002-03			

* New at Edison HS, 10th graders are located in their own self-contained Academy.

Model Components



Separate 9th Grade Success Academy with Freshman Seminar and double-dose reading and math courses.



Career Academies for Grades 10-12, divided into teams, serving 130-150 students.



Small teacher teams in all grades.



Block scheduling with extended periods.



Extra help courses in mathematics and reading for grades 10 and 11 to enable students to meet new promotion requirements.



An alternative Twilight School.



On-site subject-area coaches for teachers and professional development workshops.



An on-site Organizational Facilitator to assist each school's administrative team.

Ninth grade attendance and passing rates of key subjects go up ...

The data below from five Talent Development High Schools show that 9th grade passage rates of Algebra I, English I, and Science went up and 9th grade attendance improved after the implementation of the Talent Development program.

Attendance Rates at Five High Schools, Pre and Post Talent Development:

Regular Attendance

Pre-TD: 69%

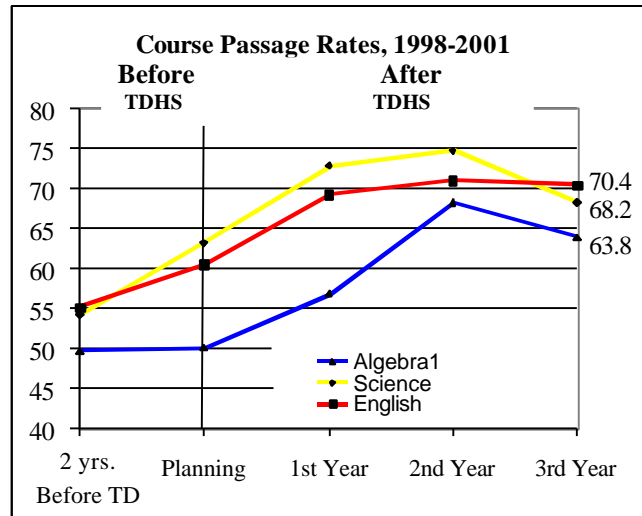
Post-TD: 80%

90% or more Attendance

Pre-TD: 17%

Post-TD: 35 %

Pre-TD: Three years leading up to the implementation of TD
Post-TD: Average beginning with first year of implementation



...and ninth graders make progress in closing achievement gaps.

Students at Talent Development high schools typically enter 9th grade with reading and math skills at the 5th and 6th grade levels. In order to enable students to close these achievement gaps, Talent Development offers a double dose of math

and English instruction in the 9th grade. During their first semester, students take two research-based, catch-up courses—Strategic Reading and Transition to Advanced Math. During the second semester, they take English I and Algebra I.

Results from the Terra Nova and Gates-MacGinitie tests, 2001-2002 School Year

Subject	Over 8 Month Period Percent of Students Gaining at Least:			Percent on Grade Level:		# of Students
	1 year	1.5 years	2 years	Fall	Spring	
Reading	43%	30%	21%	10.0%	12.0%	787
Math	51%	40%	32%	6.4%	12.1%	799

Tests administered to 9th graders in Talent Development schools at the beginning of the school year and again eight months later in that same year show that a significant number of students began to close the achievement gap. In just eight months, over half of all students made gains of one full

year in math, and one out of three made two years of gains. The percent on grade level in math at the time of testing nearly doubled during the 9th grade. In reading, one out of five students improved by two years, and the percent on grade level increased slightly.

Spreading Success: A Look at Benjamin Franklin High School

Ninth graders at Ben Franklin High School made significant gains in reading and math achievement during 2001-02 in spite of the fact that the program was in its first year of implementation. Students' average math scores went from a grade equivalent of 4.9 to 6.0 over a four-month period. Nearly a third of students gained a full two

years in math achievement. In reading, over just a four-month period, students went from a grade equivalent of 5.8 to a 6.7 grade equivalent, a gain of nearly one whole grade. Nearly a third of the students improved their reading levels by one and a half years or more in one semester.

Gains in Grade Equivalents on Standardized Tests* for Franklin HS 9th Graders, 2001-02

	Grade Equivalents			Over a 4 month period		
	Fall	Winter	Gain	Percent Gaining:		
				1 year	1.5 years	2 years
Reading	5.8	6.7	0.9	45%	29%	16%
Math	4.9	6.0	1.1	54%	37%	31%

*Students took the Gates-MacGinitie Reading test and the Terra Nova Math test.

Higher percentages complete college preparatory coursework ...

The two Talent Development High Schools with the longest history in the program, Strawberry Mansion and Edison, registered dramatic gains in the number of new graduates completing a minimum sequence of college preparatory courses (two years of math, science, and foreign language and four years of English) in the years since the start of the initiative.

rates jumped sharply between 2001 and 2002 (after years of stagnation) due to the impact of new system-wide graduation requirements. As the table below indicates, Mansion's current rate (80%) is higher than that of the eight comparison schools (57%) and Edison, which started at a much lower level and which has a higher rate of poverty and percentage of bilingual students, scores at about the same level as the comparison schools (54%).

District-wide and comparison school

Percentage of Graduating Seniors Completing a Minimum College Preparatory Sequence of Courses*

School	Before TD	After TD		Percent Increase	Percent Poverty
	1998 %	2001 %	2002 %		
Mansion	53%	67%	80%	+ 51%	84%
Edison	17%	34%	54%	+ 215%	86%
Comparison Schools**	29%	28%	57%	+ 97%	78%

*A minimum college preparatory sequence includes two years of mathematics; Talent Development gives students at least three years of mathematics. **Eight demographically similar neighborhood high schools.

...and 11th Grade PSSA scores are rising.

Test scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in both reading and math at Strawberry Mansion and Edison High Schools improved despite the fact that a *much larger number of students took the test*, including many who would have dropped out of school in previous years.

PSSA 11th Grade Math Scores: Strawberry Mansion HS and Edison HS, 2000-2002*

School	Scaled Score			% Below Basic		Number of Students Tested		% Tested
	2000	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2002
Mansion	1020	1060	1160	91%	56%	105	237	89%
Edison	1060	1070	1080	85%	79%	196	350	84%

*Scores from comparison schools are not included here because rates of participation in testing, which have varied significantly in previous years, are not yet available.

Eleventh grade students at Strawberry Mansion gained a substantial 100 points in math on the required statewide 2002 PSSA test, the largest jump at Strawberry Mansion since the inception of PSSA testing. The percentage of students scoring Below Basic

dropped dramatically, from 91% to 56%. These students constituted the first cohort of 11th graders to have completed three years of the Talent Development model. At Edison High School, also in its third year of implementation, math scores continued their upward trend but at a more modest rate.

PSSA 11th Grade Reading Scores: Strawberry Mansion HS and Edison HS, 2000-2002

School	Scaled Score			% Below Basic		Number of Students Tested		% Tested
	2000	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2002
Mansion	990	1030	1050	77%	70%	101	237	89%
Edison	1010	1040	1050	70%	68%	172	357	86%

Reading gains for 11th graders at Strawberry Mansion and Edison High Schools on the PSSA statewide test continued their upward movement at a moderate pace. Strawberry Mansion scores increased by 60 points over three years of testing and Edison's grew by 40 points. Again, these gains occurred even though the numbers of students taking the test more than doubled at both schools.

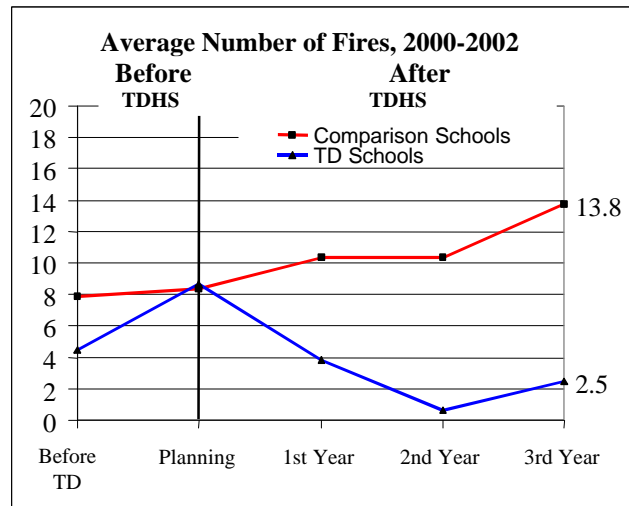
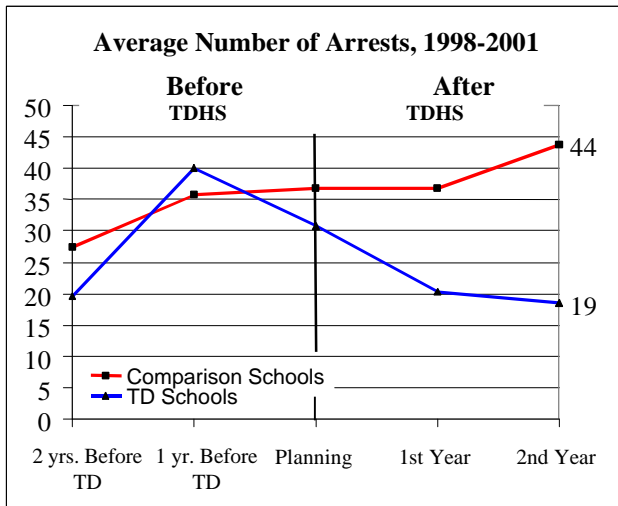
Praise for Talent Development

“The fires in the schools you are working with are significantly lower than other schools equivalent in grade and population. The safe environment you provide is commendable.”

Philadelphia Deputy Fire Marshall William C. Schweitzer (in a letter to the Philadelphia Education Fund July 24, 2002).

Talent Development High Schools show declines in arrests and fires while comparison schools register increases ...

Indicators of school climate continue to show improvement in the five high schools. The number of arrests and fires have declined since the inception of the reform model.



The graphs shown above illustrate the decreases in incidents reported to the Fire and arrests reported by Police Departments for the five Talent Development High Schools. These high schools had an average

of 19 arrests per school, compared to an average of 44 in eight similar non-Talent Development schools, and just 2.5 fires compared to about 14 at the control schools.

...and suspensions decline by over 40%.

Total suspensions after the implementation of Talent Development decreased dramatically at almost all schools. Reporting of suspensions varies by school so it is unwise to compare rates between

schools. Changes in rates over time within a school are shown below since it is assumed that the accuracy of reporting remains somewhat consistent within each school.

Average Suspensions Per 100 Students, 9th graders

School	Before TD	After TD	% Change
Simon Gratz	121	68	-43%
Edison	85	55	-35
Strawberry Mansion	19	13	-30
Ben Franklin	13	46	+260
Germantown	137	38	-73
Total	375	220	-41%
Average per 100	75	44	-41%

Teacher turnover weakens implementation and imperils students' opportunities to learn.

Models of reform are really about people—in this case, skilled and committed teachers and administrators. Yet the Talent Development schools in Philadelphia, like other high-poverty urban high schools, are plagued by administrative and teacher turnover and the assignment of untrained novices and substitutes to key courses.

The table below provides an example of this problem at one school. Only one math teacher has been teaching in the Ninth Grade Success Academy continuously since its creation in the fall of 1999. It is not unusual for Algebra I teachers to be substitutes or

emergency-certified teachers—this in a gatekeeper course that is pivotal for students' educational and economic life chances.

A last-minute wave of teacher resignations across the city in the summer and fall of 2002 exacerbated the problem of teacher vacancies, even in normally easy-to-fill areas such as English and Social Studies. In some of the Talent Development core courses in Fall 2002, students have been instructed by per diem substitutes. **A vacancy in even one position can affect as many as 100 students per semester.**

Ninth Grade Success Academy Mathematics Teachers at one Talent Development High School: Credentials and Years in School

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Math Position #1	Apprentice 1 st Year	Apprentice 2 nd year	Certified 3 rd year	Certified 4 th year
Math Position #2	Certified Veteran 1 st year	Certified Veteran 2 nd year	NEW TEACHER Apprentice 1 st year	NEW TEACHER Apprentice 1 st year
Math Position #3	Certified 1 st year	NEW TEACHER Certified 1 st year	Certified Veteran 1 st year	Certified Veteran 2 nd year
Math Position #4	Substitute 1 st year	NEW TEACHER Substitute 1 st year	Certified (Elem. Ed) Long Term Sub 2 nd year	Certified (Elem. Ed) Long Term sub 3 rd year

Red = Teacher new to the 9th Grade Success Academy. Blue = At least one year experience in the 9th grade Academy. NEW TEACHER = First year of teaching experience. Arrows represent length of tenure in the 9th Grade Success Academy.

New Courses

The CRESPAR Center at Johns Hopkins has developed new 10th and 11th grade courses. All of these are fall semester “transition” courses designed to fortify students’ core skills so that they can succeed in English II and III and in Geometry I and Algebra II during the spring semesters of their sophomore and junior years.

New in 2002-2003 are:

- 10th Grade--Geometry Foundations
- 10th Grade--Reading and Writing in Your Career
- 11th Grade (pilot course)--Algebra II Foundations
- 11th Grade (pilot course)--College Prep Reading and Writing

Planned for 2003-2004 are:

- 9th Grade World History
- 9th Grade Problems of the Day for science course
- 12th grade Senior Seminar (spring of senior year; emphasizes research papers)

Costs and Revenue Sources

The fully implemented model costs \$300 per student. This covers the cost of 3.5 coaching staff per school, curriculum materials, and evaluation. Schools themselves pay for training stipends, some additional books and supplies, and extra teachers to cover the block schedule.

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About Talent Development and This Report

The Talent Development High School national effort at Johns Hopkins University’s CRESPAR Center is led by **James McPartland**, Executive Director of Talent Development High Schools; **Nettie Legters** and **Robert Balfanz**, Associate Directors and Research Scientists; and **William Morrison**, CEO of Talent Development High Schools Implementation Center. For more information, call 410-516-5191. www.csos.jhu.edu.

This report is published by the Philadelphia Education Fund, a non-profit local education fund that is the regional partner for the Talent Development work in Philadelphia. It is authored by **Kurt Spiridakis**, a researcher at the Philadelphia Education Fund. **Betsey Useem**, the Fund’s Director of Research and Evaluation, **William Morrison** at Johns Hopkins University, and **Ruth Neild**, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Pennsylvania assisted with the report. The Fund gratefully acknowledges the assistance of researchers at the Office of Research and Student Data at the School District of Philadelphia.

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