

School Board of Brevard County

2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way • Viera, FL 32940-6601
Desmond K. Blackburn, Ph.D., Superintendent



May 14, 2018

Hershel Lyons, Chancellor
Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Dear Chancellor Lyons,

This letter is in response to your request on April 23rd for further details of the outside entity/external operator contract as part of our district's turnaround option plan (TOP).

Provide the outside entity/external operator's evidence of a demonstrated record of effectiveness per statutory requirement.

TNTP has demonstrated effectiveness in school turnaround through support to districts and schools via a diagnostic process that produces important data to assist district and school leaders in understanding gaps in instruction and broader academic programs. Once armed with data, districts and TNTP work together to achieve positive outcomes for students. The below case studies highlight the customized partnership and scope of work we craft with each of our partners based on the findings from an initial exploration of their unique challenges.

- **Hudson Elementary, Pasco County, FL:** TNTP has supported the leadership team at Hudson Elementary to improve its overall school grade from an F to a C in one year. This turnaround occurred through improving their school culture building the school leader's capacity around academic strategy, implementing aligned materials, and using data to differentiate teacher and student-level supports. Additionally, we worked with school leaders to implement new math curriculum last year, a year ahead of all elementary schools in the district transitioning to these materials. As part of an effort to enact the school and district's vision for instructional excellence, teachers were observed regularly and received feedback aligned to the Instructional Practice Guides (IPG). In classroom walkthroughs conducted quarterly this year, our team observed improvements in all Core Actions of the rubric in ELA and math. Furthermore, student attendance has increased, with chronic absenteeism being cut by half as compared to last year. Students in grades 3-5 demonstrated growth in both ELA and mathematics in all grades on the state assessment between 2016 and 2017. In some grades, the percentage of students scoring level 3 or higher grew by double digits (23% increase in 4th grade ELA and a 13% increase in 4th grade mathematics). Additionally, the proficiency gap between White students and Hispanic students shrank school-wide by roughly 3 points in ELA and 8 points in mathematics between 2016 and 2017.

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- **Springfield Empowerment Zone, Springfield, MA:** TNTP partnered with struggling middle schools in Springfield, MA to help them exercise the new autonomy they were granted as part of an innovative and comprehensive turnaround approach. Our work included strategic needs and assets analyses, and ongoing leadership development. We created and implemented a comprehensive transformation plan grounded in effective talent management and evaluation support, as well as targeted academic work and development of a culture of learning. In our first year of support, chronic student absenteeism decreased while teacher attendance increased. We helped schools retain more of their best teachers while exiting low-performers: two schools we supported retained all of their top-performers and exited 71% and 80%, respectively, of their lowest performers. Schoolwide culture also improved measurably: in just the first six months, out-of-school suspensions dropped in one school by 7%. We also positioned all partnering schools to strategically manage their talent by focusing on retaining their best teachers and filling vacancies much earlier in the hiring season, when top candidates are typically looking for positions. All schools launched new standards-aligned curricula in ELA and math, along with related professional development. In one school, ELA classrooms that received our academic support consistently outperformed their network peers, and in the majority of cases by 10 percentage points or more.
- **Boston Public Schools, MA:** In 2014, Boston Public Schools expanded its partnership with TNTP to craft and implement strategies for making sure its schools were prepared to help students and teachers meet the new standards, with a special focus on supporting Boston’s struggling schools. Initially, a comprehensive assessment of the district was conducted to answer one simple question: what kind of teaching and learning is happening in the classroom? We visited 147 classrooms, analyzed 175 student assignments and surveyed 2,300 teachers—nearly two-thirds of the district’s instructional staff. Based on those findings, we worked with district instructional leaders to create a plan for supporting high-needs schools. TNTP supported instructional superintendents to focus on supporting rigorous instruction, and scaling up TNTP’s coaching model in four high-needs schools. Additionally, TNTP provided professional development to instructional leaders to support struggling schools to create learning environments in which students are held to high standards—and given the instruction they need to meet them.
- **Pinellas County, FL:** TNTP supported the “Scale Up for Success” initiative in five elementary schools in Pinellas County, Florida for 18 months, starting in January 2015. Our work included supporting coaches to help teachers improve, working with leaders to increase the number of effective teachers in their buildings, creating positive and safe learning environments for students, and making substantial changes to create the conditions necessary for effective school turnarounds. These schools cut discipline referrals in half in the 2015-16 school year. Each school we supported in Pinellas made significant academic gains in the 2015-16 school year, some as large as 20 percentage points in the number of students with passing scores in math and ELA in grades 3-5.
- **Neumann-Goretti, Philadelphia, PA:** Since April 2015, TNTP has partnered with Saints John Neumann and Maria Goretti Catholic High School (“SSNG”) to help the school actualize its vision of providing a college preparatory education to all members of its racial and socioeconomically diverse student population. Over the course of fourteen months, TNTP conducted four phases of work for SSNG:
 - 1) A comprehensive diagnostic of their academic model, teacher development strategy and school culture;
 - 2) The development of a one-year school transformation plan, informed by the diagnostic’s findings;
 - 3) Leadership coaching and progress monitoring throughout the school year focused on the priorities and goals set forth in the school’s transformation plan; and

4) The creation of a four-year strategic plan to guide the school's ongoing transformation efforts.

In the school's first year of its school transformation strategy, key leading indicators such as teacher effectiveness, instructional culture and student culture improved significantly, putting the school on a trajectory towards achieving its long-term vision.

Explain the role of the outside entity/external operator in the recruitment, selection, and placement of instructional personnel with proven experience & capacity to serve students who may need intensive remediation and instruction. Include specific information about the external operator's authority in this area.

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Brevard Public Schools (BPS) has made the staffing of Endeavour Elementary a priority among the other 56 elementary schools through implementation of the following strategies. Endeavour has the opportunity to advertise, interview and select the instructional staff first prior to all other schools. Endeavour has a differentiated staffing plan to reduce class size and add additional support to the school. Endeavour also has been allocated additional staffing units including a second Assistant Principal, a support unit for guidance and additional office staff to assist parents.

Under TNTP's management structure as our External Operator, the Assistant Superintendent of Leading and Learning and the district team of support for Endeavour Elementary, in partnership, will conduct a review of all school data components including teacher and student data to develop a comprehensive turnaround plan. Controlling factors to determine personnel will include but are not limited to performance data, teacher VAM data, school culture and demographic needs. TNTP, we will review teacher placement and make changes to instructional coaches and classroom teachers in relation to performance. TNTP will guide supervise and train the instructional personnel, planning, coaching, curriculum and strategies to improve student outcomes.

TNTP'S strategies will be monitored via BPS tools already in place including use of the IPG tools when monitoring quality instruction, the Insight Survey to look at school culture and use of district assessments to monitor student achievement.

Ensuring data drives decision making and programmatic improvement is fundamental to the work. At TNTP, they use data to identify exemplars, make the case for change, establish proof points, and course correct as needed. In addition to support provided to dozens of states and districts in using data to make meaningful changes for their schools, students, and families based on both short-cycle and longitudinal analyses, they have also engaged deeply in cycles of continuous improvement to determine how well programs and tools affect student outcomes.

Programs to improve student outcomes.

The longest-running programs to date for TNTP are the Teaching Fellows Programs. Since the first study of effectiveness of the Teaching Fellows Programs published in 2011, they have relied on a combination of external evaluation partners, internal Research & Evaluation department analyses, and state teacher prep provider program report cards to provide greater insight into how well teachers recruited, trained, and coached by the program staff improve student achievement. In NYC, TNTP-trained teachers performed as well as their traditional route peers between 2000 and 2010. Over a ten-year period, the average achievement gains of students of New York City Teaching Fellows were equal in math and slightly lower in ELA compared to the gains of teachers from traditional routes.

Additionally, New York City Teaching Fellows are more racially diverse and more likely to work in hard-to-staff areas than new teachers from more traditional routes.¹ In a 2013 study, across nine TNTP sites, *secondary math* TNTP-trained teachers were, on average, as effective as comparison teachers—and more effective than certain groups. Students taught by novice TNTP-trained teachers outscored students of novice comparison teachers by roughly 4.5 months of additional learning. Experienced Fellows were as effective as their peers.² Most recently, a 2017 study across seven TNTP Teaching Fellows Programs found that TNTP-trained teachers perform just as well as new teachers who come through other prep programs. Fellows were also more likely to still be teaching a year later, compared to teachers from other programs. The second-year retention rate for Fellows was 6% higher than for other new teachers.³

TNTP's internal analyses has allowed them to drill deeper into programmatic levers for improving student outcomes, particularly, their coaching approaches. For example, the reports Fast Start (2014) and Leap Year (2013), summarize, what has been learned over years of training new teachers to focus on a streamlined set of skills required to successfully focus on improving student achievement from day one of teaching. As they have investigated how coaching work affects teacher development, looking at indicators such as classroom observations as well as student survey results (which other studies, including the Measures of Effective Teaching Study, have shown to correlate with teacher value-added scores).⁴

In states that analyze prep provider effectiveness, TNTP's programs have received positive evaluations:

- In Nashville, in SY2014-15, early career Fellows in Nashville, on average, significantly outperformed other beginning teachers across the state in both elementary and secondary subjects. Additionally, they performed about the same as average grade 4-8 math and high school teachers in the state, regardless of experience.⁵ In the newly designed 2016 program report card, the state gave Nashville Teaching Fellows the highest available rating (Category 4), driven by the fact that Fellows exceeded the statewide average in their observation and value-added scores.⁶
- In Louisiana, 22% of first-year TNTP-trained teachers rank in the 81st percentile or better when compared to the rest of the state (including experienced teachers). Additionally, almost 50% of them outperform the statewide average, as compared to just 39% of other first-year teachers around the state. In SY2013-14, second-year teachers with value-added scores outperformed more than 60% of all teachers statewide, regardless of experience level.⁷
- In Texas, TNTP-trained teachers had a positive effect on student outcomes as compared to other pathways, in the range of 0.05 to 0.10 standard deviations in math.⁸

¹ Boyd, D., Dunlop, E., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Mahler, P., O'Brien, R., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). *Alternative certification in the long run: A decade of evidence on the effects of alternative certification in New York City*. (Boyd et al., 2011)

² Clark, M., Chiang, H., Silva, T., McConnell, S., Sonnenfeld, K., Erbe, A., Puma, M. (2013). *The Effectiveness of Secondary Math Teachers from Teach For America and the Teaching Fellows Programs (NCEE 2013-4015)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (Clark et al., 2013)

³ Gerdeman, D., Wan, Y., Molefe, A., Bos, H., Zhu, B., & Dhillon, G. (2017). *Impact of TNTP's Teaching Fellows in urban school districts*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. (Gerdeman et al., 2017)

⁴ Maier, A., Cellini, K., & Grogan, E. (2013). "Fast Start": Jumpstarting early career teacher effectiveness through targeted training and coaching. Paper presented at the 38th annual meeting of the Association for Education Finance and Policy; Grogan, E. & Maier, A. (2014). Learning while doing: Evaluating effectiveness of school-year coaching interventions. Paper presented at the 39th annual meeting of the Association for Education Finance and Policy; Blue, G., Brady, V., & Goodrich, M. (2017). Teacher Instructional Practice and Student Perceptions of Teaching: An exploratory investigation using structural equation modeling. Poster presented at the 42nd annual meeting of the Association for Education Finance and Policy.

⁵ TN State Board of Education (2015). [2015 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Education Preparation Program Providers](#). TNTP: Nashville Teaching Fellows.

⁶ TN State Board of Education (2016). [2016 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs](#). *The New Teacher Project- Nashville Teaching Fellows*.

⁷ TNTP analysis of LA DOE data. Updates to the state's public preparation program dashboards coming in 2017.

⁸ Lincove, J., Osborne, C., Mills, N., & Bellows, L. (2014). Training teachers for profit or prestige: Analysis of a diverse market for teacher training. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66(5), 415-434.

Explain the role of the outside entity/external operator in the recruitment, selection, placement, training and oversight of the school leadership team, including specific information about the external operator's authority in these areas. Provide evidence the school leadership team has a proven record of success in turnaround schools and the qualifications to support the students served.

In the most recent models of school improvement, TNTP has partnered with nine districts to conduct teacher recruitment and development funded by federal Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) awards. Each SEED district partnership engaged in a robust external evaluation designed to determine how the model drives student achievement. While it is too early to share results of these evaluations, the SEED sites are attracting diverse educators- exceeding national rates of teachers of color entering classrooms in their districts and each evaluation will provide additional insight into how the work improves student outcomes.

Similarly, the principal leadership development approach, the Pathway to Leadership in Urban Schools (PLUS), are currently undergoing evaluation to determine impact on student outcomes. While it is too early to provide results from these evaluations, the internal analysis offers promising signs. In case studies of PLUS leader impact, the teachers they coach and the principals who mentor them speak extensively of their focus on instructional leadership and improving student outcomes. In cities like Camden, when PLUS leaders have been given the opportunity to lead a school as principal, instructional culture and attendance improve; similar positive improvements in student attendance have been observed in San Francisco. Across Shelby County and Philadelphia, PLUS leaders have helped demonstrably improve assessment results for nearly 3,900 students, compared to their peers whose teachers were not supported by PLUS leaders.

Tools to monitor and improve school leadership and culture

One critical tool used in the work across the country- including in schools where the program participants teach and lead- is the *Instructional Culture Insight Survey* ("Insight"). TNTP has partnered with more than 1,650 schools since 2010 to understand how the best school leaders manage their schools using teacher feedback on Insight to help leaders understand and improve their school's instructional leadership practices in specific, concrete ways. Built on survey data from more than 130,000 teacher responses nationwide and independently validated by leading research organizations, Insight breaks down complex leadership practices and culture into discrete parts, giving school leaders the clarity they need to build the workplace that teachers deserve. Critically, in an external validation study by the American Institutes of Research, models controlling for school demographics showed that the instructional culture index score predicts student achievement.

Another important tool for focusing on how students experience instruction is our *TNTP Core Rubric*. In 2014, TNTP released the Core Teaching Rubric (Core), a teacher observation instrument designed to describe, assess, and provide actionable feedback on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) instructional practice. A key distinguishing feature of Core is its focus on student actions in the classroom. Rubrics that focus on student actions, rather than teacher behaviors, in the classroom are still somewhat rare. The internal analyses has found that higher scores on TNTP Core positively correlate with teacher value-added scores for the Teaching Fellows in Tennessee, Louisiana, and North Carolina. TNTP is currently engaged in a validation study, led by researchers at RAND, to confirm this relationship in a broader sample of teachers.

If the district had a partnership with the outside entity/external operator, explain the difference in the proposed services changing from a partnership to an operator.

Brevard Public Schools has been a partner with TNTP for several years through the Pilot Florida Implementation Network (PFIN). This work includes the network support with alignment of instructional materials and support in the creation of a process and procedure for the adoption of materials using the Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET) tool. Additionally, TNTP has guided our work in the following areas:

- Instructional Practice Guide (IPG) which assists teachers and administrators in preparing quality instruction and the instructional shifts.
- College Board's guidance and support to include the training and implementation of the College Board's college match tools to promote college access and success.
- Assisting in the creation of the Vision of Excellence Instruction which guides our focus on equitable quality instruction in every classroom.
- Supporting our work with English Language Arts (ELA) *Collections* instructional material in secondary schools through a Professional Learning Project.

The difference will be from being one of our "thought partners" on best practices and guidance to shifting their work to be direct and take deliberate actions that must be accepted by Brevard Public Schools with a complete understanding of the role that TNTP has to ensure success for Endeavour elementary. TNTP will be the lead on all of the work at Endeavour, guiding and directing the administrative team and teachers to make adjustments and changes in instructional practices.

Provide a detailed budget for the contracted amount with the outside entity/external operator.

The estimated cost for one year of support (July 2018 to June 2019) from TNTP to Endeavour Elementary is \$492,927. A breakdown of these costs are below:

Budget Area	Total
Dedicated Staffing Costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner (~0.2 FTE) • Site Manager, Mathematics (~0.75 FTE) • Senior Effectiveness Coach, English Language Arts (~0.75 FTE) • Analyst (~0.2 FTE) 	\$304,426
Program Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel (assuming non-local support) roughly 2-3x per month for Site Manager, Coach, and Partner. • Office Supplies 	\$188,501
TOTAL	\$492,927

Thank you for your support as we move forward to provide quality excellent instruction for every child in Brevard Public Schools. Should you have any additional questions concerning our selection, please contact Jane Cline, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Leading & Learning, at cline.jane@brevardschools.org or 321-633-1000 x411.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Desmond Blackburn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Desmond K. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Superintendent

cc: Wayne Green, Regional Executive Director