Innovative School Models Planning Guide
Summer 2022

This planning guide is aligned to the Tennessee Department of Education's Innovative School Models (ISM) [guidance document](#) and addresses each of the application components. It also contains links to national examples and resources to further support your thinking around how you will innovate in your middle and high schools. By reflecting on the questions and considerations in this document, your team should be better prepared to submit a strong application.

This planning guide is broken out into eight steps, including:

1. **Needs Assessment:** What data or current opportunities do you have to guide your thinking for the ISM Grant?
2. **Vision & Purpose:** What will your project accomplish, how, and for which students?
3. **Student Experience:** What will be different about when, where, and how students learn?
4. **Partnership:** What K-12, industry and post-secondary partners will you need to be successful?
5. **Outcomes & Evaluation:** What are the most important outcomes from this innovation and how will they be evaluated?
6. **Implementation Milestones:** What are the most important milestones that must be accomplished to launch this project?
7. **Sustainability:** What financial and stakeholder engagement strategies do you need to consider to sustain your innovative model beyond the ISM Grant?
8. **Resources & Best Practices:** What potential areas of innovation, national examples, and resources are available to guide your application?

Needs Assessment

What data or current opportunities do you have to guide your thinking for the ISM Grant? Identify the data needed to conduct a thorough assessment of the needs that the ISM grant may be able to address. Also consider existing opportunities you have through partnerships, other funding sources, or current initiatives that could be bolstered by this investment. Consider what this information tells you about your district's current strengths, needs, and opportunities.

Focus Area	Data to Review	Considerations
Students	• Enrollment and attendance data disaggregated by student subgroup	• Which students are graduating high school on time? Which students are not?

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	• Grades, credit attainment, and graduation rates disaggregated by student subgroup • THEC's college-going rate by high school and demographics • If available, postsecondary persistence and completion data from National Student Clearinghouse's StudentTracker	• Which students are enrolling in postsecondary after high school graduation? • Which students are completing a postsecondary degree or credential?
College and Career Programming	• EPSO enrollment and achievement data • College for TN's FAFSA completion data by high school • Counselor capacity • Current postsecondary and employer partnerships • Jobs4TN LMI Dashboard • CTE alignment with high demand jobs	• Which EPSOs does your district offer? Which students enroll in these courses? Which students successfully complete them? • What are the barriers to EPSO participation and success? • What are counselors' caseload sizes? Which students are benefiting the most from college and career advising? Which are not? • How are current postsecondary and employer partnerships impacting student success and how do you know? • What are the high-demand, high-wage jobs in your community? Are your current CTE pathways aligned with these needs?
Budget and Staffing	• Current funding sources • District's ESSER plan and SCORE's Trends in Tennessee ESSER plans dashboard • Current student enrollment and demographic trends • District and high school budgets • District organizational chart	• How are different funding sources (local, ESSER, Perkins, grants, etc.) supporting current college and career programming? • Given your current student enrollment trends, how will the upcoming implementation of TISA impact the funding your district will receive in the future? • How can the responsibilities of current staff be adjusted and optimized?
Facilities and Equipment	• Facilities walkthroughs • Equipment inventory	• Which facilities and equipment need to be upgraded? • Which facilities and equipment are underutilized?

Vision & Purpose

What will your project accomplish, how, and for which students? Use the data and opportunities considered through your needs assessment, to inform the vision and purpose of your project.

Planning Question	Considerations
What challenge are you trying to solve?	• Transitions (middle to high school or high school to postsecondary) • Logistical and physical barriers • Access to coursework and learning opportunities • Preparation for high school and postsecondary
Which students should be prioritized to solve this challenge?	• Economically disadvantaged students • Students of color • Academically at-risk students • Students with Disabilities • English Learners
Which high school program components must be addressed to solve this challenge?	Consider the high school components from TDOE's ISM guidance document: • Postsecondary credential attainment • Early Postsecondary Opportunities • Industry credential attainment • Access to industry-specific equipment • Work-based learning • Offering high school courses at employer sites or postsecondary institutions
If these components are addressed effectively, what will the impact be on students, your district, and your community?	• Academic achievement • Attendance and engagement • Credential attainment • Wage-earning potential
Are there ways to address this challenge by expanding an existing program or initiative? Or will doing so require a new program?	• Success of current programs

Student Experience

What will be different about when, where, and how students learn? Consider how your innovative school model will transform the school experience for students.

Focus Area	Questions to Consider
Time	• How will learning opportunities be extended outside the traditional school schedule to accelerate completion of postsecondary opportunities and credentials?

	• What adjustments, if any, will need to be made to the current master schedule? • What other adjustments need to be made to enable this program?
Space	• Where will students learn? • How will you ensure all students have access to the learning site? • What additional equipment will be necessary?
Modes of Learning	• How will instruction be delivered to students? In-person, hybrid, or virtual? • Who will serve as instructors? • How big will classes be? • What additional academic supports will be in place to support students?

Describe the best practice(s) you will implement within the focus areas of time, space, and modes of learning.

Focus Area	Best Practice(s)
Time	
Space	
Modes of Learning	

Partnership

What K-12, industry and post-secondary partners will you need to be successful? K-12 partners may include other high schools or neighboring districts. Identify your current K-12, postsecondary and employer partnerships and consider how each is currently making an impact in your district.

Partner	K-12, Postsecondary or Employer	Current Impact

Consider if any of the partnerships above could be strengthened or expanded for the purpose of this project and list them below. If there are gaps, identify K-12, industry and post-secondary partners you will need to be successful and how they will support your innovative school model.

Potential Partner	K-12, Postsecondary or Employer	Potential Impact

Outcomes & Evaluation

What are the most important outcomes from this innovation and how will they be evaluated? Select three to five key outcomes, consider how you will evaluate your progress toward each. Decide which kinds of data will need to be collected to capture the impact of your program on students. Evaluation strategies may include:

- **Analysis of key program data:** Applications, enrollment, attendance, retention
- **Analysis of student achievement:** Credit attainment, GPA, graduation, credential attainment
- **Stakeholder surveys:** Student, staff, and partner surveys
- **Focus groups and interviews:** Students, staff, and partners

Outcome	Evaluation Strategies

Implementation Milestones

What are the most important milestones that must be accomplished to launch this project? List major milestones and consider when each milestone should be accomplished.

Milestone	Estimated Deadline

Sustainability

What financial and stakeholder engagement strategies do you need to consider to sustain your innovative model beyond the ISM Grant? Use the action steps below to begin planning how to sustain your programming over the long term.

In the memo [Braiding Funding to Support Equitable Career Pathways](#), [Advanced CTE](#), in partnership with [Education Strategy Group](#) and the JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s [New Skills Ready Network,](#) share important action steps and considerations for braiding funding to support and sustain CTE programming.

Action Step	Considerations
Align stakeholders around a common goal	**Engage leadership** from across sectors to build support for programming. **Collaborate with stakeholders,** including students, parents, teachers, and community leaders to align programming to specific needs. **Agree to a common language** by communicating goals of the programming and the data that will be used to measure success.
Analyze funding sources	**Review all available federal, state, and local funding sources** to determine how they may be able to be used to sustain your programming. **Estimate the funding impact of the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) on your district** by reviewing your recent student enrollment trends and demographics. **Examine potential untapped funding sources** to maximize opportunities for sustaining and growing your programming.

Mitigate shifts in funding	• **Engage partners** to serve as champions through transitional periods of funding. • **Use philanthropic and employer groups** to supplement gaps in funding and encourage cross-sector collaboration to support local programs.
Use data to communicate impact	• **Collect stories of impact** from students, staff, and community partners. • **Identify existing forums** for sharing progress toward goals and impact of programming with key stakeholders.

Resources & Best Practices

What potential areas of innovation, national examples, and resources are available to guide your application? Consider the strategies and resources below as you design an innovative school model project for your middle and high schools.

Program Component	Strategies	Resources
Career Exploration	• Utilize career interest assessments • Leverage technology to provide academic and career planning to students during the school day • Implement exploratory and introductory CTE courses for middle school students • Provide middle school students with short-term interactions with business and community leaders (guest speakers, site visits, and job shadowing)	• YouScience • Xello • Association for Career and Technical Education for Career and Technical Education • College for TN Career Finder
Early Postsecondary Opportunities	• Provide training and support for current teachers to teach dual enrollment courses • Leverage student-level data to identify students with potential to succeed in dual enrollment • Adopt an automatic EPSO enrollment policy for students identified as having high potential • Eliminate course costs and fees for dual enrollment students • Publicize dual enrollment opportunities through family information sessions and text message campaigns • Partner with a local postsecondary institution to launch an early college program	• College In High School Alliance • Spotlight: District of Columbia Public Schools • Spotlight: Dallas Independent School District

Industry Credential Attainment	• Use local workforce data to strengthen and align CTE offerings to local workforce demands • Partner with a local TCAT to launch an Early Technical High School	• [Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Credentials (tn.gov)](#) • [Credentials Matter](#) • [Clarksville Montgomery County Schools' Early Technical College at TCAT](#)
Intentional Academic Advising	• Implement a 9th grade on-track system • Implement a 9th grade success team • Ensure students taking dual enrollment and other advanced coursework receive regular support from a counselor	• [The University of Chicago Network for College Success](#) • [Preventable Failure: Improvements in Long-Term Outcomes when High Schools Focused on the Ninth Grade Year](#)
Work-based Learning Opportunities	• Launch a work-based learning center to increase students' access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities • Partner with industry to expand job shadowing, work-based learning, and pre-apprenticeship opportunities • Provide opportunities for students to participate in work-based learning during the summer	• [TDOE WBL Toolbox](#) • [Advance CTE's Measuring Secondary CTE Program Quality: Work-Based Learning](#) • [Spotlight: Michigan](#)
Supports for High School To College Transitions	• Implement a college and career readiness platform to support students' postsecondary planning and preparation • Leverage technology-enabled advising tools to support students in the postsecondary planning and transition process • Use National Student Clearinghouse data to evaluate programming and improve postsecondary advising supports	• [SchooLinks - College & Career Readiness Platform](#) • [Student Success Agency](#) • [Mainstay — The Engagement Platform Powered by Behavioral Intelligence](#) • [Get Schooled	Get Schooled](#) • [StudentTracker for High Schools - National Student Clearinghouse](#)
Summer Learning Opportunities	• Strengthen the high school transition by offering summer bridge programming for rising 9th graders • Provide students the opportunity to take dual enrollment courses during the summer • Provide summer bridge programming for recent high school graduates to support a strong transition to postsecondary.	• [Ninth Grade Counts Summer Bridge Guide (ed.gov)](#) • [Summer Learning Toolkit	Annenberg Institute at Brown University](#)