

Baltimore to open innovation high school based on TDHS

TALENT DEVELOPMENT HIGH SCHOOLS (TDHS) will open an innovation high school—a neighborhood public school embracing new visions of what makes an urban high school successful—in Baltimore in September 2004.

The school will stress intense academics, a personalized atmosphere, community involvement, an arts and expression program, and upper-grade career academies in science and technology and arts and communications.

The Talent Development High School model has already been put in place in more than 50 existing schools in 10 states and the District of Columbia. “But this is the first time we will be building a high school from scratch,” CSOS researcher Robert Balfanz said.

Sharing space in a building that currently houses a middle school, the Baltimore TDHS will offer a full aca-

demical program, featuring “double doses”—two courses per year—of literacy and mathematics instruction for students who need to catch up. It also will offer early college and advanced placement courses for eligible students.

The school will enroll 180 ninth-graders in the 2004-05 school year, adding a new class of freshmen each year until the school has about 600 students in grades 9-12. The school will be open to students from across the city, though most will be drawn from the neighborhood surrounding the school.

Talent Development schools quash students’ feelings of anonymity with programs like the ninth-grade Freshman Seminar, which aims to prepare students for the demands of high school by focusing on study skills, time management, test taking, goal setting, and peer relationships.

The innovation high school program is funded by the city and the Fund for Educational Excellence, a 20-year-old partnership of businesses, parents, educators, and community members dedicated to improving educational opportunities and the academic performance of students in the Baltimore City Public School System. CSOS was chosen after several rounds of review by the city’s High School Steering Committee.

While the Baltimore Talent Development High School will present a great opportunity for city students, it also will offer CSOS researchers and curriculum writers a chance to see their work in action, allowing them to see what works for students and teachers and what needs further study, Balfanz said. “We want other schools to see that this is a real school in a real city environment and that it’s a model that can work anywhere.”

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