



# **Five-Year Strategic Plan**

## **2015 – 2020**

### ***Timbuktu Academy Board of Directors***

**Marvis Cofield, Board Chairperson**

**Dr. Robert Bland, Board Member**

**Dr. Gloria House, Board Member**

**Kelly Gardner, Board Member**

**Kamau Kheperu, Board Member**

**Cha-Rhonda Edgerson, Principal**

*Educational  
Matrix Services*



# Five-Year Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

## Strategic Planning Process

### Stakeholder Meetings

June - August 2015

### Board Retreat

August 14 – 15 2015

### Board Meeting

September 23 2015

## SESSION TOPICS

- Academy Background
- Vision, Mission and Values
  - Curriculum
  - SWOT Analysis
- Emphasis Statement – key areas for action
  - DPS Turnaround Plan
- Implementation & Other Considerations
  - Summary and Next Steps

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## **Brief History**

Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology was incorporated in 1997 and received a charter from Detroit Public Schools (DPS) in 1998. The school opened with grades K-3 and 50 students, operating in temporary quarters located at 9980 Gratiot on the eastside of Detroit. The school was established with a commitment to educating all children using an African-centered methodology. The founders of the school were pioneers in this approach to educating children and applied the teachings of Asa G. Hilliard III, Ed.D., Kofi Lomotey and other Black scholars who had researched the need for an African-centered teaching methodology.

The achievement of an African-centered education – guided by an African-centered philosophy established the values and beliefs of Timbuktu and provided a sense of direction as well as a guiding force in decision making at all levels of the Academy. The school trusted the mission of the school would be a means by which African culture could be learned, thus assisting the students to be aware, understand, and be proud of their heritage, history and African heritage. It was believed that this would ultimately result in enhancing students' self image, self-esteem, and improve the overall learning process.

The administration was able to secure Provisional Teaching Certification from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for all of the staff because of the unique curriculum and the school employed qualified, committed teachers who believed in and worked to practice the African culture. In the ensuing years the majority of parents embraced this philosophy and student performance improved resulting in the school being awarded the State of Michigan Golden Apple Award in 2002 recognizing that over 90% of students passed the MEAP test.



## Introduction/Brief Background, continued

### **Problems & Setbacks**

Having grown to 150 students, in 2005 the school moved from the Gratiot trailers to a former DPS building on Doyle Street. However, a setback occurred when the MDE revoked the school's Provisional Teaching Certification resulting in 70% of the teaching staff being replaced by teachers who were not committed to the mission/philosophy of the school and its founding. The school began to lose enrollment as well as parental engagement and support.

In 2008, the school began shifting from an African-centered mission and teaching philosophy to a neighborhood school as over 90% of the parents chose the school because they believed it was better than other schools in the neighborhood and/or within walking distance from their home. The school encountered other challenges including moving away from requiring teachers to teach grade level material based on the Michigan Grade Level Skills and not having a systematic student assessment system in place.

### **MEAP and Scranton/Detroit Public Schools Turnaround Plan**

Timbuktu's MEAP scores declined from 2008 to 2011 when the school found itself in the lowest 5% of state scores and was designated a Priority School threatening its founding label as a school of "Science and Technology." Designated for extra support and resources through the MDE's TEAM grant, Timbuktu's state scores increased from the lowest at 4% to 16% in 2013 and in 2014 the school's state scores progressed again to 24% as a result of implementing a number of new strategies: implementing a strong evidenced-based curriculum, employing a data driven assessment and learning system, increasing emphasis on effective teaching, staff training in effective classroom behavior and culture, mandatory professional development, teamwork and teacher collaboration.

In July 2014 Timbuktu was placed on notice by DPS and required to submit a Turnaround Plan to address the issues and deficiencies noted in its educational programs and poor student achievement metrics. On October 10, 2014 the school, Board of Directors and Education Service Provider (ESP) submitted a formal Turnaround Plan and began to implement initiatives designed to move the school into compliance and improve the level of student proficiency, under stringent DPS monitoring and evaluation of its (academic) plan of action.



## Introduction/Brief Background, continued

### Board Oversight: Five-year Strategic Plan

A major DPS requirement was Timbuktu Board undergoing a process of creating a **Five-year Strategic Plan** to assist the Board in establishing goals and priorities in order to better serve the needs of the students, families and community. The plan **presented below** serves as a guide in implementing programs, evaluating effectiveness, and making adjustments as deemed necessary by the Board:

- Vision And Mission
- Environmental Scan
- Gap Analysis
- Benchmarking
- Strategic Issues
- Goals, With Action Steps And Tactics
- Annual Evaluation

The Consultant then worked with a diverse strategic planning committee of Board members, administration, staff and parents to review the situation analysis and determine a draft of key strategic issues in the following areas:

1. Academics (teaching & learning)
2. New Vision
3. Fundraising
4. Board Governance
5. Parent & Community Partnership
6. Growth



**2015-2020  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Priority Goals**

**Five-year Objectives**

**2015-2016 Strategic  
Initiatives**

**VISION**  
*To be a dynamic FAMILY-COMMUNITY centered school where students develop self-knowledge and are challenged to become the leaders of tomorrow.*

**MISSION**  
*To use the principles of Family Centered Education to:*  
**BUILD** an empowered and inclusive community of students, families and educators in a **holistic, supportive learning process**  
**ENGAGE** the whole child intellectually and culturally in a **firm academic and moral educational experience**  
**EMPASIZE** teaching and learning with a **strong emphasis on core competencies and critical thinking**  
**INTEGRATE** social, cultural, and physical **activities** as an integral part of the learning experience  
**COLLABORATE** with the broader community to **advocate for Timbuktu's Family Center School**

**Strengthen Academics:**  
*To support academic, social, emotional and physical growth of all students with high expectations for all, including exceeding external accountability standards.*

**New Vision: To rebrand the school from "Science & Technology" to a "Family/Community Centered School"**

**Fundraising & Resource Development:** *To strengthen fundraising infrastructure to expand and diversify sources of funding with a goal of 5% non-public funding..*

**Board Governance Capacity:** *To continue development of board capacity in strategic governance, resource development, and community outreach.*

**Parent & Community Partnership:** *To strengthen the partnership between the school and its families and to engage the wider community in partnerships for collaborative learning*

**Growth:** *To plan for and implement facilities, technology and other improvements that result in consistency, enhanced school image and promote sustainability.*

1. Develop K-8 learning expectations & outcomes
2. Establish student assessment system
3. Implement & ensure fidelity of evidenced based curriculum

1. Change focus to "Family & Community Centered"
2. Update web and social media marketing information

1. Increase board, parent & staff giving to 75%
2. Enhance donor outreach & recognition efforts
3. \$150,000 annual fund goal

1. Add members to board
2. Initiate ongoing board governance training

1. Enhance parent/school partnership
2. Institute collaborative partnerships with support service organizations

1. Develop long-term plan for school growth & expansion
2. Develop plan for reserve funds for sustainability
3. Start High School

1. Implement Balance Literacy & Guiding Reading programs
2. Implement K-5 Science Fusion
3. Align Math Curriculum to Common Core Standards

1. Change signage
2. Update school website
3. Rebrand marketing materials

1. Develop campaign to increase internal giving to 50% participation
2. Create corporate donor program/campaign
3. Develop marketing materials

1. Add business member to board
2. Develop plan for enhanced board governance capacity (composition, training)

1. Establish guidelines for parent/school partnership
2. Develop initial plan for outreach and community partnerships

1. Create LT facilities plan task force
2. Establish (5% goal) reserve fund



### The following are core values of Timbuktu School

#### Culture

Understanding the culture and history of our students to be proud of their ancestry, improve self esteem and learning

#### Family Centered

A school focus on the quality of education it provides for students, but also for the school's holistic regard for supporting the wrap-around service needs of the family.

#### Leadership

To build and maintain a school that develops the leaders of tomorrow

#### Critical Thinking

Being able to apply and analyze data and information in order to make better, informed educated decisions

#### Community

Comprehensive school programs that connect to social, neighborhood, government and institutional supports

## Environmental Scan: SWOT Assessment - Internal

The grid is a summary of the S.W.O.T. analysis of findings that will show, at a glance, the current state of the school

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Academic Quality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers &amp; staff</li> <li>• Good charter school reputation</li> <li>• Upward trend</li> <li>• Steady parental involvement</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Safe, clean and disciplined environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong community support</li> <li>• Diverse visionary governing board</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Stability/Technology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 years of operation</li> <li>• Fiscally sound</li> <li>• laptops, iPads, tablets, smart boards</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>School Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African Centered Culture &amp; History</li> <li>• Visionary leaders</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Inspiring Images throughout building</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Parent/Teacher/Staff Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of parental involvement</li> <li>• Waning energy and enthusiasm</li> <li>• Communication at all levels</li> <li>• Student-teacher ratio (25:1)</li> <li>• Students not having Wi-Fi at home</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited budget (library), external contributions</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Program limitations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Court Math Program</li> <li>• Lack of all-day kindergarten</li> <li>• Lack of before/after school program</li> <li>• Teachers use of classroom technology</li> <li>• Lack of African centered teachers</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Facility Space/Other Constraints</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• No board committees/business member</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Environmental Scan: SWOT Assessment - External

The grid is a summary of the S.W.O.T. analysis of findings that will show, at a glance, the current state of the school

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Preschool/Pre-K Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeder program for children at a young age</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Grants, Resource Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants and corporate partnerships to empower families, students and facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Business/Community/Parent Partnerships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with business, community, government and Charter Schools</li> <li>• Building partnerships with the PTO</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Professional development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff &amp; Board training</li> <li>• Charter School networking</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>New school model &amp; branding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community presence &amp; enrollment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>State Compliance &amp; Assessment Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local political climate</li> <li>• Local district increase in test scores</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Sustainability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing state student funding</li> <li>• Lack of support/external fund raising</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Academic Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood/new school competition</li> <li>• Teacher-staff retention</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Parents/Student/Community factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No dedicated staff for parent engagement</li> <li>• Community factors (Unemployment, Crime, Drugs, Hunger/poverty, Gentrification)</li> <li>• Academically diverse student population</li> <li>• Traffic Safety Issues of school community</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

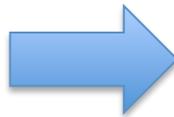
## Strengthening Academics (Teaching & Learning) Initiatives for 2015-16

**1. Investigate *new* academic standards:** in consideration of strengthening the educational outcomes for students, review all curriculum, assessment and testing standards.



**Outcome:** By October 2015, determine and implement *new* curriculum, testing and assessment protocols including recommendations to Board regarding all educational programs and activities.

**2. Determine system of internal & external assessments for program evaluation:** Have meaningful and reliable ‘holistic’ assessments of the “whole child” allowing benchmarking and to set high expectations for all students (academic, social-emotional, and physical).



**Outcome:** By Fall semester 2015, present to the Board a system of student performance assessments to measure student progress across all domains, including explanation of assessment tools, what it measures, initial benchmarks and costs.

**3. Implement new curriculum in science, writing and social studies: - in order** to achieve academic goals and objectives articulated in the DPS Turnaround Plan



**Outcome:** By end of each school year achieve a 20% increase in ELA< Math, Science, Social Studies Scantron and MEAP scores (or any new assessment standards mandated by the State Board of Education).

## New Vision (Branding) Initiatives for 2015-16

**1. Change name to Timbuktu Academy de-emphasizing “Science & Technology” and emphasizing “Family/Community Centered” school:** where the family is the natural entity to orchestrate and customize purposeful education. Emphasis on the quality of education and holistic needs of families.



**Outcome:** By Spring 2016, to establish the school’s new identity with a series of information sessions with students and staff about the change and its meaning for the school, students, families and the community.

**2. Signage, social media, marketing campaign:** Develop corporate and business relationships in order to foster partnerships and build bridges for internships and career development..



**Outcome:** By 2016, implement new signage, website, new school identify and marketing and branding campaign to introduce the community to the new Timbuktu Family Community Centered School.

**3. Corporate/business engagement:** Develop PR campaign to foster business and institutional partnerships and build bridges for school support, student internships and career development..



**Outcome:** 2016 - 2017, plan an event or share marketing materials with the local business community to develop support for the school, students and its programs

**4. Parent engagement:** Plan for parents to be highly engaged in the learning process and quality of the students’ love for learning and scholarly success,



**Outcome:** By Fall semester 2015, begin to identify activities so parents recognize their role and privilege to nurture, guide and support their children and children learn to recognize their role as stewards over their education.

## Fund Raising (Resource Development) Initiatives for 2015-16

### 1. Create a Fund Raising Program:

Establish a fund raising campaign within the Timbuktu community to attract board, administration, parent, staff, volunteer and community support for the school and its programs as a means of sustainability.



**Outcome:** By January 2016, the board should appoint a member of committee to plan and establish a donor program that focuses on encouraging all stakeholders to participant, donor management, and recognition and the role of the school ESP and business office to support such a program.

### 2. Develop a campaign to increase parent giving to at least 50%

**participation:** Research indicates that, in order to be more attractive to potential funders, our school must increase its level of parent participation in a school annual campaign.



**Outcome:** By Spring 2016, utilize staff with board leadership to encourage parents to participate in fund development program and campaign to increase available resources to enhance student learning and to initiate holistic wrap-around services and programs to benefit families.

### 3. Develop external marketing materials:

An external marketing campaign is needed to powerfully capture what makes Timbuktu unique, its new vision as a Family/Community Centered school and to tell the story far and wide to potential partners, businesses and funders..

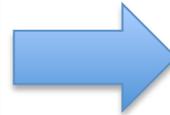


**Outcome:** By March 2016, an external marketing campaign will be developed (in print and other media) to highlight the successes of our school and identify important areas of investment of financial resources (outline uses of funds/projects to further school goals, expand services and/or benefit students and the community).



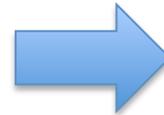
## Board Governance Capacity Initiatives for 2015-16

**1. Develop plan for enhanced board governance capacity:** in year 18 of our existence, the role of the governing board has evolved and matures. We now need to articulate a plan to enhance capacity of the board to sustain a focus on governance, fundraising, advocacy through strengthening the board to carry out the new vision and mission of the school.



**Outcome:** By Spring 2016, the Board should entertain recommendations for enhancing board governance capacity, including training, board composition (adding a business person to the board), and recommendations about the effectiveness of the curriculum, fund development, monitoring of teachers, use of data for improved instruction, and the level of parental engagement

**2. Initiating partnerships with other charter schools and boards:** Have meaningful dialogue about the advantages of working with other charter schools and boards to determine what impact it has on best practices, the ability of the board to work more effectively and efficiently and for great school and student achievement.



**Outcome:** By 2016 - 2017, the Board will take part in a collaborative initiative with other charter school boards and/or take part in a collective assessment of the benefits of a membership in school governance organization for the following year.



## Parent Community Partnership Initiatives for 2015-16

**1. Community engagement:** to strengthen the partnership between the school and its parents and to engage the wider community .in partnership for collaborative learning.



**Outcome:** By Fall semester 2015, fund a Full-time Family/Community Engagement Coordinator to develop community programs to address family issues and to help orchestrate educational choices designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society

**2. Develop guidelines for collaborative learning activities and parent engagement:** as the school grows, establish guidelines for how parents and faculty/staff partner effectively in service to students - from engagement in school life of an individual student to collective decision making.



**Outcome:** By 2016, a leadership team (sub-committee) will be established and work on guidelines for what the parent/school guidelines should look like – from an individual parent-teacher relationship to school wide practices.

**3. Increase Timbuktu's presence in the community:** Initiate plans for community meetings or events to develop relationships with other students and families, and to increase participation in our after school programs.



**Outcome:** Beginning in school year 2015 – 2016 hold at least five non-school community events or activities annually to increase awareness of the school and increase participation in after school programs.



## Growth Initiatives for 2015-16

**1. Growth:** To plan for and implement facilities, technology and other improvements that result in consistency, enhanced school image and promote sustainability.



**Outcome:** By Spring 2016, develop a long-term plan for school growth and expansion including plans for a pre-school, High School and comprehensive community programs; and, ultimately new school facilities. Plan to launch an extensive student recruitment program to target boosting fall 2016 enrollment.

**2. Utilize external marketing materials:** Plan to promote what makes Timbuktu unique, its new vision as a Family/Community Centered school and to tell the story far and wide to potential partners, businesses and funders..



**Outcome:** By Spring 2016, extend the initial rebranding into a full marketing campaign to highlight the successes of our school and programs, to enhance enrollment activities and to identify and solicit sponsors, partners and funders in an effort to grow the school, its resources and enhance sustainability.

**3. Establish a Long-Term Planning Committee:** Identify a board lead to explore new ideas for strategic growth opportunities to drive revenues and success of the school.



**Outcome:** By Spring 2016, extend the initial rebranding into a full initiate or utilize the board Turnaround/Strategic Plan subcommittee to undertake long-term planning for school growth and sustainability.



# Curriculum

**FOCUS**  
The focus of the curriculum is the traditional Common Core based standards designed to build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college, career, and life.



**Common Core Standards**

In addition to the Common Core curriculum the following courses are offered



- Art K – 8
- Physical Education K – 8
- Spanish K – 8
- Computers K – 8
- General Music K – 2
- Library K - 8

**K – 5**



- Homeroom, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies

**6 - 8**



- Homeroom, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, Spanish
- Computers, selection of specials

**Students**



**350 students**

**Staff**



**50 teachers/staff**

**Location**



**Single school**



## Assessment



In June 2014, the Michigan Legislature required the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to develop a new assessment system called the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress, or M-STEP

**K – 8 (NWEA)**

**K – 2 (Dibels)**



The M-STEP includes summative assessments designed to measure student growth effectively for today's students. English language arts and mathematics will be assessed in grades 3–8, science in grades 4 and 7, and social studies in grades 5 and 8.

## English Language Arts Standards

The standards establish guidelines for English language arts (ELA) as well as for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Because students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, the standards promote the literacy skills and concepts required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines.



The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards form the backbone of the ELA/literacy standards by articulating core knowledge and skills, while grade-specific standards provide additional specificity. Beginning in grade 6, the literacy standards allow teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects to use their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields.

Grade 6–12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are meant to supplement content standards in those areas, not replace them. The skills and knowledge captured in the ELA/literacy standards include critical-thinking skills, cogent reasoning and evidence collection skills essential for success in college, career, and life prepared for success in the 21st century.

## Key Shifts in Mathematics

The Common Core calls for greater focus in mathematics. Rather than racing to cover many topics in a mile-wide, inch-deep curriculum, the standards ask math teachers to significantly narrow and deepen the way time and energy are spent in the classroom. This means focusing deeply on the major work of each grade as follows:



- **In grades K–2: Concepts, skills, and problem solving related to addition and subtraction**
- **In grades 3–5: Concepts, skills, and problem solving related to multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions**
- **In grade 6: Ratios and proportional relationships, and early algebraic expressions and equations**
- **In grade 7: Ratios and proportional relationships, and arithmetic of rational numbers**
- **In grade 8: Linear algebra and linear functions**



### ◆ Culture and Academic Quality

- Work to immerse the *new* Family-centered culture into the school in order to facilitate a focus on the quality of education for student success, but also for the school's regard for supporting the family
- Work in an effort to ensure that the African-centered culture is continued and integrated into school life in order to create a consistent environment through which students and families will be proud of their history and African heritage
- Continuously innovate, improve, monitor and measure progress
- Curriculum review to ensure that approach and methods of learning are yielding results

### ◆ Operational Improvements

- Work to ensure that systems in place within the school create a consistent but flexible approach to handling school operations
  - Use of technology
  - Communication methods
  - Focus on continuous improvement

### ◆ Parent/Community Involvement/Marketing and Enrollment Strategy

- Work to ensure that key messages regarding the school are communicated clearly to prospective students
- Work to determine the ability to handle preschool/pre-k and after school programs
- Work to improve opportunities for increased parent participation and engagement
- Work to create programs and methods for increased business and community engagement



### ◆ Inlusiveness

- **Timbuktu will need to undertake a comprehensive and inclusive approach to making the changes identified with this Strategic Plan**
- **To address the identified concerns, the following is recommended**
  - ✓ Develop a change team (sub-committee) to address key initiatives in each area
  - ✓ Identify one to two board members to act as a resource for each key area
  - ✓ Identify of activity owners and due dates
  - ✓ Development of a tracking mechanism to monitor progress

### ◆ Recommendations

- **The recommendations in this plan are based on information we heard during the planning sessions with the Board, staff, administration, the DPS Turnaround Plan and from other Board initiatives and planning sessions.**

### ◆ Monitoring

- **The final tasks addressed by Timbuktu will be based on the decisions of the individual change teams and their Board liaisons.**



### ◆ Strategic Plan

- Review and approval of the high level strategic plan by the Board. Obtain buy in, agreement and support from the administration
- Identify project leader/change team to address key initiatives in each area
- Continuously innovate, improve, monitor and measure progress
- Facilitate Administration, staff and Board in identifying Strategic Plan key initiatives, obtain buy-in and agreement from staff and administration
- Establish measures and tracking mechanism for each initiative
- Establish a time table to periodically review measurables to see if goals are being achieved

### ◆ Financial Considerations

- Prepare a proposed project cost and finance review to determine resource requirements for the school before undertaking significant project initiatives
- Review and take appropriate direction