

Turner Technical Arts High School: Florida

A Summary of:

WILLIAM H. TURNER TECHNICAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL: Two for One and One for All, 1998, *The New Urban High School: A Practitioner's Guide*, The Big Picture Company and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

WILLIAM H. TURNER TECHNICAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL: A Statistical Profile, 1998, Internal Document

Overview

William H. Turner Technical Arts High School (Turner Tech) was founded in 1993 to provide inner-city youth with high academic and technical skills to prepare them for the 21st Century. Students who graduate from Turner Tech earn both a high school diploma and an industry-recognized certification. The school is operated by Miami-Dade County Public Schools and draws students from the entire county. Students who apply to the school are chosen on three criteria: attendance, conduct, and technical interest.

POPULATION

During School Year (SY) 1995-96, Turner Tech served 1,856 students. In SY 1997-98, this number increased to 2,073 students. The majority of students were African American (57.4 percent), followed by Hispanic (36.5 percent). The proportion of white students has increased from 4.0 percent in SY 1996-97 to 5.3 percent in SY 1997-98. The proportion of students from other racial/ethnic backgrounds have increased in the same period from 0.4 percent to 0.8 percent. The majority of the students come from low-income areas and 85 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The school has 100 teachers, 55 percent of whom are white, 25 percent African American and 17 percent Hispanic.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Follow-up studies of the first Turner Tech graduating class of 184 students in 1996 showed that:

- ◆ 63.1 percent were enrolled in two- or four-year colleges
- ◆ 10.3 percent went to a technical/trade school

- ◆ 11.4 percent were working on jobs related to their field of study
- ◆ 2.7 percent had joined a branch of the armed forces

Follow-up studies of the 1997 graduating class, with 397 graduates, showed that:

- ◆ 71.5 percent were enrolled in two- or four-year colleges
- ◆ 11.8 percent were working on jobs related to their field of study
- ◆ 6.8 percent went to a technical/trade school

When compared to other Miami-Dade County high schools, Turner Tech has been:

- ◆ consistently below the district’s dropout rate (2.7 percent vs. 8.85 percent)
- ◆ at or above the school district’s average score for the High School Competency Test administered to all 11th grade students in the state (for the 1996 test, Turner Tech students averaged 73 in the communications part of the test and 66 in the mathematics test compared to the district’s average of 67 and 66, respectively)

When Turner Tech 10th graders are compared to their statewide peers on the Florida Writing Assessment tests:

- ◆ 92.7 percent vs. 85.6 percent scored at 3.0 level or better in the Writing to Convince part of the test

- ◆ 87.6 percent vs. 86.7 percent scored at 3.0 level or better in the Writing to Explain part of the test

An overview of the scholarships provided by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools College Assistance Program to Turner Tech students shows an increase in:

- ◆ number (in 1996, 62 students received scholarships, increasing to 178 in 1997, and 218 in 1998)
- ◆ percentage of academic scholarships (in 1996, 67 percent of the scholarships were academic, increasing to 93.8 percent in 1997, and 94.2 percent in 1998)

Turner Tech has been recognized by many organizations as a model school and was nominated as one of the top ten New American High Schools (U.S. Department of Education); one of the five New Urban High Schools (U.S. Department of Education and The Big Picture Company); and one of the five national models of school restructuring (American Federation of Teachers).

Key Components

Currently, Turner Tech offers seven academies: Agriscience, Applied Business Technology, Health, Industrial Technology, NAF/Fannie Mae Foundation/Academy of Finance, Public Service/Television Production, and Residential Construction. The school is also researching the possibility of developing a program in media production. Students select one of the academies as freshmen and select one of 22 areas of specialization in their sophomore year. The basic elements of Turner Tech’s educational program are:

- ◆ an integrated curriculum, where academic subjects are blended into the career major (students must complete a sequence of core and technical courses to graduate)

- ◆ a “two for one” diploma (students receive both a high school diploma and an industry certification)
- ◆ hands-on experiences in actual workplaces and school-based enterprises
- ◆ teamwork (both students and teachers work in teams)
- ◆ programs based on job market projections and future job demand as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor

Contributing Factors

Teachers as Generalists

Teachers and administrators share teaching, administrative and counseling duties. In addition to their usual functions, teachers and administrators plan the units, develop curriculum and standards, counsel and guide students, and are expected to be role models.

Employer Involvement

Each academy has an advisory committee composed of local business and industry representatives. The committee advises on the skills students need to succeed in the workplace, in addition to offering internships and other opportunities to expose the students to real-world situations.

Learning Through Occupation

By exposing all students to academic and vocational subjects, Turner Tech eliminates the traditional division between college-bound and non-college-bound students. The number of Turner Tech students who pursue postsecondary studies shows that vocational training, when associated with high academic standards, is no deterrent to further education.

Students as Workers

Students learn work-related skills in all aspects of their school life. They are expected to demonstrate mastery on district, state, and national tests, and are required to maintain proper behaviors with an emphasis on integrity, trust and tolerance.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

For *The New Urban High School*, The Big Picture Company's staff visited 23 "highly regarded" urban high schools in 16 cities focusing on six basic elements: work-based learning, vocational-academic integration, mentoring, post-secondary links, career exploration, and supportive learning environments. The schools included in the report were considered for developing programs that excelled on these basic elements. The *Statistical Profile* includes follow-up studies of graduating students and data on school attendance, dropout and academic performance compiled by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

William H. Turner Technical Arts High School is located in Miami-Dade County, FL.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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