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## Howard team develops curriculum tools

**O**VER THE LAST THREE YEARS, the Talent Development Secondary School Academic Team at Howard University has been developing curriculum enhancements for middle and high school students. Aligned with district standards, these tools are designed to connect academics with social skills and help students understand the transitions in their educational lives—from middle to high school, from high school to college and beyond. Key curriculum enhancements are:

*Talent Development Info-Study Packet*, a collection of strategies to help students learn study skills and time management. The packet also includes learning aids, such as a math glossary and punctuation and capitalization guidelines.

*Reference Notebook*, materials that support class assignments in core subjects. The notebook includes *How to Write a Research Paper*, *Science Project Guidelines*, *How to Prepare a Presentation*, *Map Skills*, a *Computer Glossary*, and *College Knowledge*, which increases students' awareness of college applications, scholarships, and internships.

These tools are research-based, culturally and contextually relevant, and designed to help students apply what they have learned by using hands-on manipulatives. Developed from teacher and student focus groups, classroom observations, and standardized test results, these tools are updated on suggestions from teachers, parents, and school officials.

The how-to handbooks have been implemented by two District of Columbia schools. The biggest challenge to implementation was achieving the buy-in of teachers and providing classroom demonstrations on how these tools can supplement daily lessons and serve as a resource in preparing students for standardized tests, said Deirdre Thompson, CRESPAR researcher, who developed the tools with graduate student Leslie Arthur.

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