

# THE FUTURE IS MINE

## *Parent Information Packet*

### **1. What is The Future Is Mine (TFIM)?**

TFIM is a “ready for the real world” initiative committed to encouraging all youth, grades K-12, to find their passion and pursue their dreams—but in an informed way. TFIM does this by supporting the school community to create opportunities that will combine the dreams of students with real-life experiences that will empower them to make smart decisions concerning their future careers, and ultimately, future success.

### **2. What is The Future Is Mine (TFIM) Student Project?**

The Student Project is the year-round, in-school component of TFIM, now operating in some 26 schools. It involves a diverse team of young people in Grades 9-12. The team is charged with creating career awareness/exploration experiences and civic engagement activities for themselves, peers and the school community. The goal is to reach the entire student body, as well as younger peers in middle/high schools, through interactive projects. Although an educator(s) at each school facilitates the team, all projects are initiated, driven and executed by students. The TFIM Student Project consists of four strands of work, focusing on career awareness/ exploration, leadership development and civic engagement. Student teams must complete the following: A peer-to-peer project within the high school, a peer-to-younger peer project within the district, an individual project, and planning/facilitating a portion of the annual Student Leadership Conference.

The TFIM Student Project activities that are created in each school will:

- Be student initiated, driven and executed
- Meet the needs of the individual school community
- Target all students, as Career Exploration and Civic Engagement should be an integral piece of every students’ education
- Maintain the integrity of the overall TFIM initiative mission

### **3. Does TFIM help students get into college?**

Only in the sense that TFIM encourages *all* students to pursue some kind of post-secondary education, whether it’s a bachelor’s degree, associates degree, apprenticeship program, or other training/certification. We are dispelling the myth that “getting into a good college” insures success. TFIM believes that knowledge of one’s learning style, work style, passion in life, aptitudes, and creating a tool kit of skills to be added to and transferred during one’s career path is the foundation of preparing for life after high school.

### **4. What is the most common MISCONCEPTION of TFIM?**

There are actually **TWO** common misconceptions about the TFIM Student Project that our Teams are working hard to change within their school community but require administrative and staff support:

#### **1. “TFIM only affects the kids on the Team”**

While it is true that the TFIM Team consists of a core group of students, the goal of each project the Team creates is to reach **hundreds** of students. The TFIM Team acts as ambassadors for their peers in terms of relaying information, creating new opportunities, and providing momentum for their peers to take initiative in preparing for their own futures.

## 2. *“TFIM is an extra-curricular activity that is difficult to justify during the school day”*

TFIM should not be considered an extra-curricular activity. All meetings, activities, presentations and time off campus can be directly correlated with the PA Standards for Career Education and Work, and depending on the content of the project created, can also be tied directly to various other PA Standards. In addition, Teams are encouraged to get approval from Administration to have activities count toward the Senior Project requirements. And, finally, the Teams are also trained in collaborating with teachers of specific subject areas in their school to create activities that would meet the goals of TFIM and those of the specific subject area (either as an individual student or for an entire classroom / grade level).

## 5. What is required of the TFIM Team during the school year?

TFIM Students will create:

- a. One Peer to Peer Project\*
- b. One Individual Project\*
- c. One Peer to Younger Peer (Middle or Elementary School) Project\*

\*These projects can be combined in a number of ways and can be determined by Advisor and TFIM Coordinator.

And, in addition to creating original projects, will be given the task of:

- d. Planning & facilitating a portion of the 2011 TFIM Student Leadership Conference on April 14 and 15, 2011.

## 6. Is there adult supervision of the TFIM Team?

An educator(s) within the school acts as the TFIM Advisor. He/She acts as both mentor and coach to the student Team. In addition to facilitating all student meetings and activities, the Advisor is required to attend 2 (two) full-day trainings, and 2 (two) days at the TFIM Student Leadership Conference at the end of April (2 additional training days occur but they are not scheduled during the school year).

## 7. In regard to the entire student body, what kind of students will benefit from the activities of the TFIM Team?

All students entering the “real world” after high school will benefit from TFIM.

## 8. When does the TFIM Team Meet?

Meeting times vary tremendously from school to school. Every effort is made to avoid having students pulled from the classroom, but is not always possible. Effective communication between the TFIM Advisor, TFIM student, and classroom teacher is necessary. It is important that academia and preparation for the real world have an equal balance in priority.

## 9. Student Criteria for Ongoing Participation:

The following standards have been set for TFIM Students participating in the Project:

- If a student is suspended from school, he/she will also be suspended from TFIM activities for the same number of days
- If a student chooses to quit the project, he/she will need to submit a resignation and will not be permitted to return that same school year.
- Students should attend 75% of meetings and actively participate in and complete all 4 projects.

TFIM is setting high expectations for its students. However, the staff of TFIM is fully aware that situations will arise that will interfere with a student's performance or participation throughout the course of the year. When such situations occur, we ask that you use your discretion in helping the student to set attainable goals and experience success. If all avenues of intervention and support have been exhausted and a student should be considered for removal of the project, the TFIM Advisor, school principal, and TFIM Coordinator should have consensus. Removal from the project, however, should be the last alternative. Our overall philosophy is the belief that the students are better off *with us*, than *without us*.

#### 10. What kind of student is recruited for the TFIM Team?

Our core TFIM Team consists of a heterogeneous mix of:

- **Leaders in the hallways, study halls, and buses.** *These are the students who are being heard by their peers but not necessarily in a positive way! TFIM empowers them to be heard with a positive message.*
- **Gifted Students.** *These students are intellectually and academically bright. Most plan on attending college....However...that does not mean they know what they want to do in life or have the necessary skills to succeed.*
- **Students who lack future direction**
- **Students who are clearly set on a specific career**—*why shouldn't they be given the opportunity to see what else is out there?*
- **Students who have the potential for leadership but have not found a comfortable platform!**

#### 11. Who Is Eligible to Attend the 2011 TFIM Student Leadership Conference?

All students are eligible to attend based on:

- Satisfactory participation in all projects (at the discretion of the Advisor)
- Potential students deemed as a "new recruits" for next year's TFIM Student Project
- Meeting all school rules and regulations