









2016, treatment schools began implementing TFL programming in grades 4 through 8. After the first year (2016–2017), the 22 schools in the control group implemented TFL.

Of the 2,941 students whose parents or guardians consented that they could participate in data-collection activities associated with the study, 2,740 were enrolled in schools that were randomly assigned to treatment or control conditions. 1,422 were enrolled in treatment schools at the start of the study, and 1,318 were enrolled in control schools at the start of the study. Before conducting any analyses, we examined the extent to which the study sample was *balanced* (i.e., had similar background characteristics across intervention and control conditions) and *representative* (i.e., those who consented to participate in data collection had similar background characteristics as those who did not). We found that, though the sample was balanced and there were no significant differences in the characteristics of students in the experiment by treatment group, the sample was not representative: Students whose parents or guardians did not consent to data-collection activities tended to have lower achievement and were also more likely to have discipline issues and higher absenteeism.

To evaluate the impact of TFL, we conducted a cluster-randomized trial in two stages. Stage I examined impacts after one academic year of exposure to TFL. Stage II examined trajectories for students' outcomes from over the course of two academic years using a two-phase multiple baseline design, which is a within-person repeated-measures design that can be used to appraise the extent to which an intervention alters growth trajectories. In the focus groups, we allowed for open discussion among participants. To document the implementation of TFL, we relied on data from interviews with key JPSD, MDE, and TFL staff; analysis of the student survey; and data from the study of three treatment and three control schools, which involved focus groups with school instructional staff and interviews with school leaders.

### ***Data Sources***

#### *1. Interviews with Key Jackson Public School District, Tools for Life, and Mississippi Department of Education Officials*

RAND researchers conducted in-person and phone interviews with personnel in JPSD, TFL, and MDE in two data collection windows (spring 2017 and spring 2018). We spoke with all personnel who were involved in the direct implementation of TFL at the district level. This included the one JPSD TFL lead and six TFL implementation coaches. We also spoke to the three consultants from Tools for Life Corporation who were embedded in the schools to offer supports and guidance to school leaders and instructional staff. We purposefully selected JPSD central office staff from the superintendent's office and those who were in charge of guidance counseling and curriculum standards to gain insights on the vision of TFL and how TFL could be integrated into broader district processes and practices. We purposefully selected the one JPSD school board member who had recently started their term to gain insights on their role, expectations for the district, and for TFL. We purposefully selected officials from MDE who could provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between the state and district. Table 2 lists which stakeholder we interviewed in which window.



















