

Sullivan County Schools

Superintendent Acknowledgment

I, Jubal C. Yennie, as Director of Sullivan County Schools, acknowledge the efforts of staff members from our district who have served on the Tennessee Teacher Leader Council during the 2013-14 school year to develop a teacher leader model for our school district.

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Director of Schools

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MODEL SUMMARY

Building Bridges

Building Bridges, Sullivan County Schools' Teacher Leader Model, exemplifies the system's belief that "its greatest strengths are its employees, their unwavering focus on children, and their commitment to support a purposeful team effort." Creation of, and participation in, a teacher leadership initiative will foster collaboration, community, and teacher capacity, with a focus on improving student learning and teacher effectiveness as an extension of the instructional leadership provided by the building-level administrative team. Building Bridges establishes three levels of support: Classroom Support Coach, Learning Support Coach, and Curriculum and Instruction Support Coach. Teacher leaders will be selected through a clearly-defined, multi-tiered process. Teachers will be compensated for these additional responsibilities as part of their career progression utilizing differentiated pay funding.



23

schools in the district



10,978

student population

876

teachers in the district



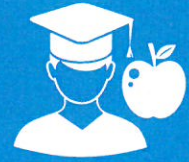
\$ 9,377.04

per pupil expenditure



RATIONALE

As Tennessee continues to strengthen key reform efforts to ensure improved academic outcomes for all children throughout the state, quality of instruction remains the “single greatest determinant of learning”. To that end, Sullivan County Department of Education concentrates effort, resources, and focus on instruction, as evidenced by Goal 1 of the Board of Education Strategic Plan: “Sullivan County will demonstrate sustained growth in student achievement.”



Teacher Leaders Believe:

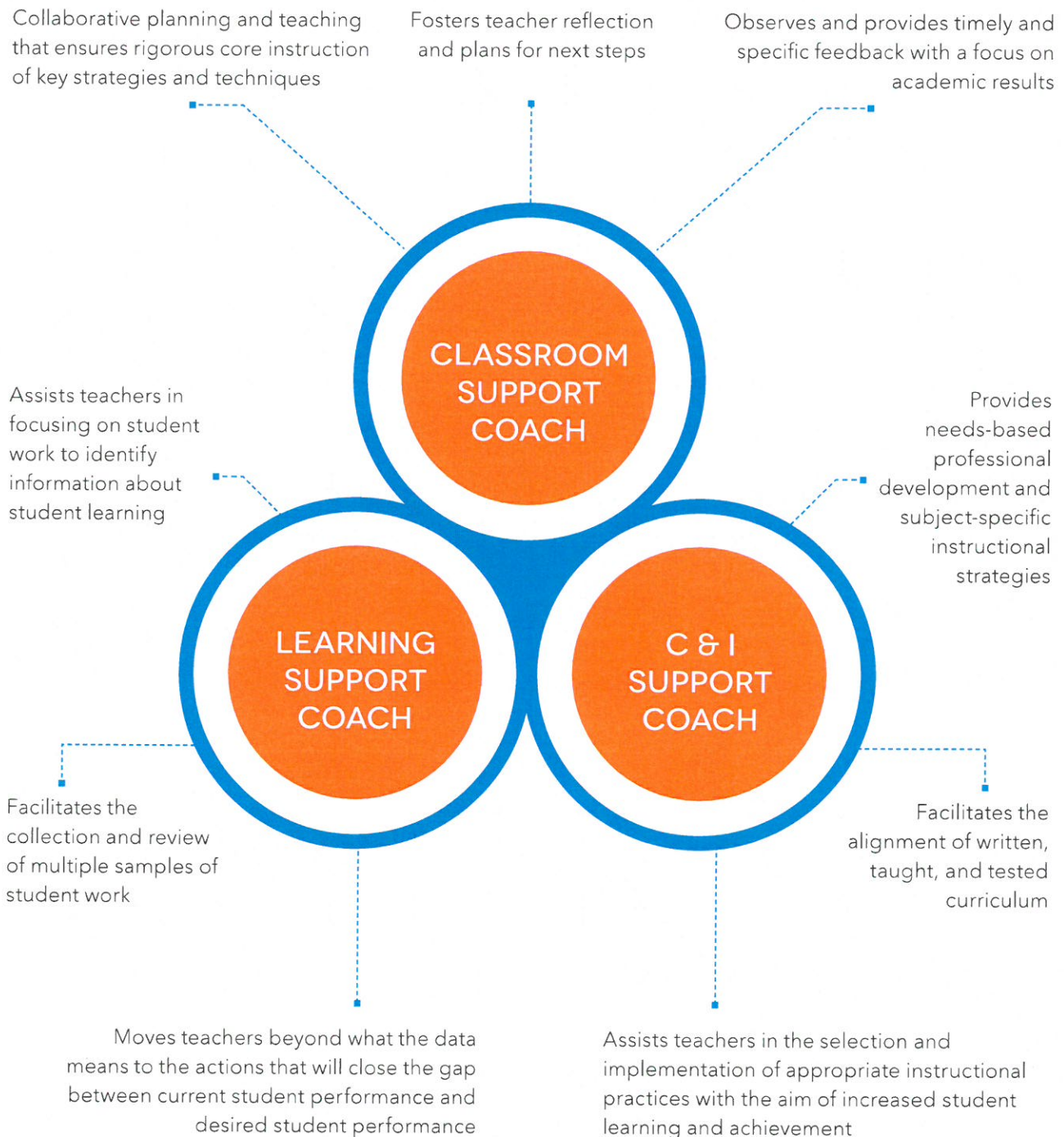
- All children have the right to a high-quality education.
- All students can achieve at high levels.
- All teachers can achieve at high levels.
- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Maintaining effective communication and collaborating with all stakeholders is a key component to growth and development.
- Instructional decisions should be based on students’ individual needs, determined through analysis of multiple work samples.



Teacher Leaders Have Capacity To:

- Influence others to achieve results while building relationships through mutual respect; respond to needs of adult learners.
- Support all teachers in using effective instructional strategies to meet students’ diverse learning needs.
- Leverage deep knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student learning.
- Persevere in the face of obstacles.
- Hold self and others accountable for student learning and adult learning.
- Foster a culture of excellence through personal leadership, collaboration, and a commitment to ongoing learning.
- Display honesty, trustworthiness, reliability, and sincerity in all interactions.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES



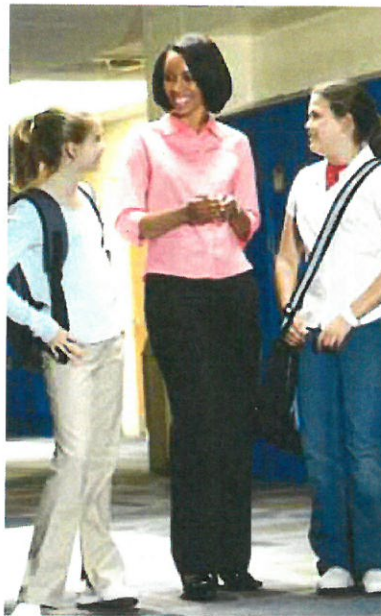
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

1 IDENTIFY

- Elicit support from all stakeholders (i.e. Director of Schools, Board of Education, and building-level administrators).
- Create and publish iBook documenting all facets of the teacher leader model.
- Distribute information and recruitment posters to all teachers framing teacher leader model.
- Designate page on district website for links to documents (application, iBook, etc.) in reference to teacher leader model.
- Host informational meetings for interested teachers regarding the teacher leader model.
- Market the teacher leader model as an opportunity for teacher advancement.

2 SELECT

- Budget for an appropriate number of teacher leaders for the district.
- Communicate selection process to teachers and principals.



3 RETAIN

- Provide monetary compensation (differentiated pay allocation).
- Deliver ongoing professional learning for teacher leaders and administrators throughout the school year.
- Schedule streamlined work release with minimal classroom disruption (creative/flexible scheduling) for teacher leader responsibilities.
- Establish process for addressing issues between teacher leaders and teachers or administrators.
- Evaluate model through online surveys of teacher leaders, teachers, and administrators.



BUILDING CAPACITY FOR TEACHERS TO LEAD

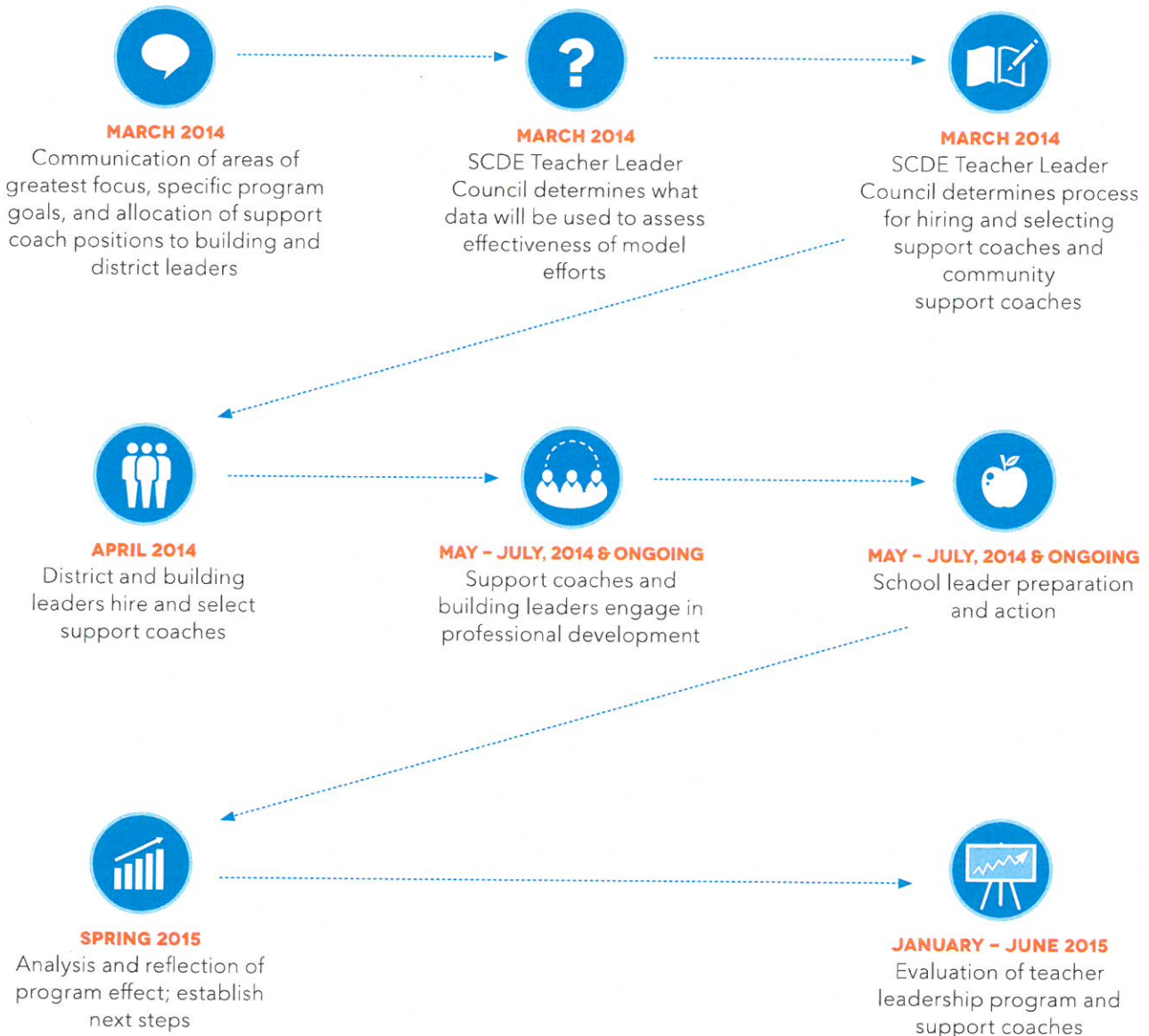
Implementation of this teacher leader model requires preparation for teacher leaders, building staff, and building / district leaders. The following are suggested best practices for effective implementation.

- Identify teacher leader model coordinator.
- Clearly define and communicate roles and responsibilities to all, including examples and non-examples of model roles.
- Prioritize building-level needs and collaborate with district-level leaders.
- Rethink time, space, scheduling, and other support structures to ensure strong model effectiveness and implementation.
- Sign Teacher Leader Agreement identifying commitment, confidentiality, and fidelity to the model.
- Train teacher leaders in state initiatives to be implemented at school level.
- Require Teacher Leader Orientation for selected teacher leaders and all administrators.
- Develop school-specific action plan based on identified areas of need.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for teacher leaders each semester.



IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

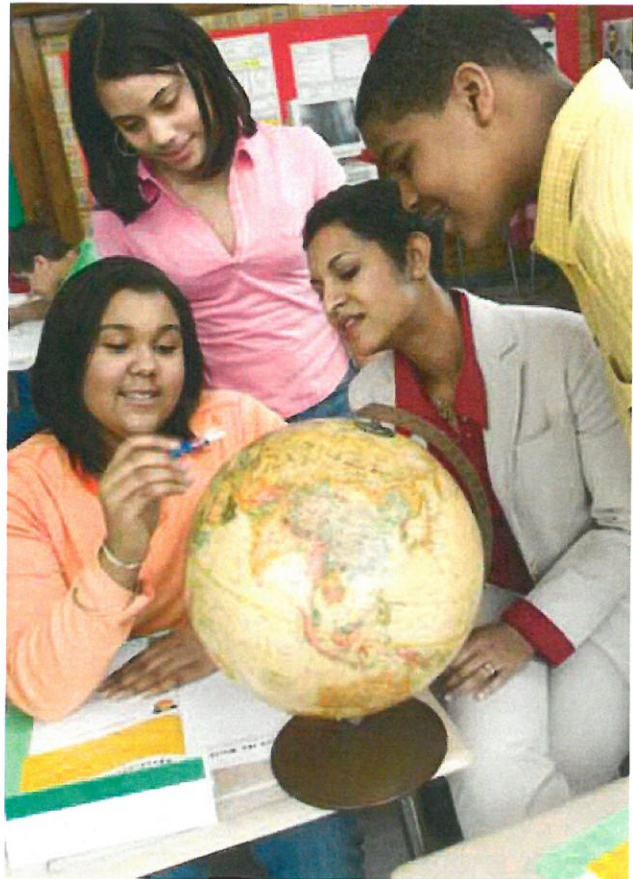
The planning and building of our model has been ongoing since November 2013. We began implementation of the model in March 2014 as we began to market the Building Bridges Teacher Leader Model for Sullivan County Schools. We continued in April with the application, interview, and hiring process. Our next steps are orientation and training, as well as identifying our schools' greatest needs for teacher leaders as we begin planning for instructional growth for students and teachers. The reflection and evaluation of this model will be ongoing during our first year of implementation: 2014-2015. As a result of these findings, we will revisit our plan to make necessary adjustments and modifications.



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

As the team of educators from Sullivan County participated on the council, they also developed a teacher leader model for Sullivan County. The team paralleled their research with the Teacher Leader Model Standards and the Sullivan County Board of Education's mission, vision, goals and strategic plan to select an area of focus for teacher leaders. The Board of Education's goal, "To demonstrate sustained growth in student achievement" has become the basis for the model design. After identifying a focus for our model, the Sullivan County Teacher Leader Council made presentations to the Director of Schools and district leadership team, the Board of Education, the Differentiated Pay Committee, and system administrators. These presentations included an in-depth narrative of the model to include an iBook, visual representations, and response to questions from the audience. Our model emphasizes coaching and support for teachers and principals. The model has clear parameters and objectives for teachers who are identified and selected to participate as teacher leaders in our schools. These teachers are proven leaders who are highly respected and have shown an outstanding ability to teach with a proven record of student learning. It is the goal of our teacher leader program to provide support for the classroom teacher and principal in areas where we can experience gains in academic achievement. Examples are collaborative planning and teaching, moving teachers and principals beyond data to actions that will close the gaps, and selection and implementation of instructional practices with the aim of increased student learning. Once identified, teacher leaders will have time scheduled to collaborate with teachers, principals, and district leaders. Additionally, schools will be given autonomy to direct the

teacher leader model at the building level, based on the identified needs. As an avenue of support, teacher leaders will participate in ongoing, prescriptive professional development. Teacher leaders will receive a stipend for their work to be funded from the differentiated pay allocation. Collegial relationships exist when teachers discuss problems and difficulties, share ideas and knowledge, exchange techniques and approaches, observe one another's work, and collaborate on instructional projects (Peterson, 1994). Support Coaches must be able to establish relationships of trust and confidence. It is important for teachers to have a voice in developing their personal learning plans because there must be a belief in the professionalism of the teacher and an investment into input and reflection on needs or areas the teacher wishes to improve (Harrison, 2006).



BEST PRACTICES

Using a set of guiding questions, Sullivan County Schools thoughtfully considered best practices that would support implementation of their teacher leader model.

- District and Building Supports
- Evaluation of Individual Teacher Leader Model & Model Effectiveness
- Pre-Existing Capacity in District

District and Building Supports

- Creative/flexible scheduling; planned release time
- Prescriptive professional development plan
- TEAM Evaluation Model
- Partnership with local higher education institutions dedicated to building teacher leaders

Evaluation of Individual Teacher Leader Model & Model Effectiveness

- Teacher leader questionnaires
- Principal and peer feedback surveys
- Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) Analysis
- Test data analysis

Pre-Existing Capacity in District

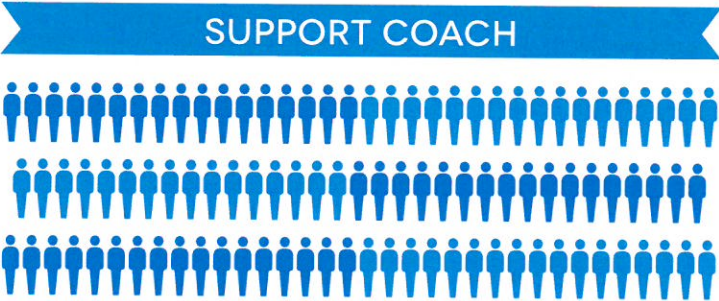
- School-based professional learning guided by teacher directed professional development
- Instructional leadership team
- Budget allocations for professional development
- Site-based management of flexible scheduling



COST & SUSTAINABILITY

In Sullivan County, the teacher leader model is funded by the state differentiated pay allocation at a total cost of \$202,457. From that figure, 101 Support Coaches are paid a stipend of \$1500 to fulfill teacher leader responsibilities within the school building as described in the model. Our district saw the need

for one of the teacher leaders at each building (total of 22, titled Community Support Coach) to serve as a building-district liaison and receive an additional stipend of \$1000 with further job responsibilities. Cost projections also include employee benefits.



$$101 \text{ positions} \times \$1,750.35 \text{ per position}$$

\$176,785.35

A blue banner with the text "COMMUNITY SUPPORT COACH" is positioned above a group of blue human icons arranged in three rows of four, representing 22 positions.

$$22 \text{ positions} \times \$1,166.90 \text{ per position} = \$25,761.35$$