



Application

114417 - Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) System FY 2017  
116051 - Teacher Leadership and Compensation Grant Application Spring 2015  
Teacher Leadership and Compensation System

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## Primary Contact

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**Program Area of Interest** Teacher Leadership and Compensation System

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**Agency** Administrative Services, Iowa Department of

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## Organization Information

**Organization Name:** Mount Vernon Community School District

**Organization Type:** K-12 Education

**Tax ID:** 42-6025675

**DUNS:** 00-982-0119

**Organization Website:** www.mountvernon.k12.ia.us  
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**Benefactor**  
**Vendor Number**

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## Recipient Information

**District** Mount Vernon Community School District  
Use the drop-down menu to select the district name.

**County-District Number** 57-4554  
This field should fill automatically based on the choice above. If the number listed does not match with the district selected, contact Lora Rasey at 515-281-6719.

**Honorific** Dr.

**Name of Superintendent** Gary S. O'Malley

**Telephone Number** 319-895-8845

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**Street Address** 525 Palisades Road SW

**City** Mount Vernon

**State** Iowa  
Use the drop-down menu to select the state.

**Zip Code** 52314

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## TLC Application Contact

**Honorific** Dr.

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**City** Mount Vernon

**State**

Iowa

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**Zip Code**

52314

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## **Narrative**

**Abstract/Executive Summary - Please provide a brief overview of the school district's proposed TLC plan. This summary should highlight your vision and goals and describe how the primary components of the plan connect to one another. (5,000 characters maximum)**

## **Executive Summary**

The Mount Vernon Community School District will use the resources of this grant to move to a structured and differentiated system of teacher leadership which will strengthen instruction and improve student performance. We propose the addition of teacher leadership positions in three underserved areas: 1. support for students struggling with social and emotional issues which have become barriers to learning; 2. support within classrooms for academic and behavioral intervention and enrichment; and 3. support for teachers to encourage creative, engaging and innovative practices. Three new leadership roles-- instructional coaches, resource mentors, and PLC leaders-- will work to design and deliver collaborative learning opportunities which strengthen teaching and learning across the Mount Vernon Community School District.

Let's get specific about what we mean by a structured and differentiated system of teacher leadership. First, we plan to hire two instructional coaches, one K-6 and one 7-12, to organize district improvement efforts for addressing the underserved areas listed above. These are full release positions with an extended contract and an additional stipend. Second, we propose the hiring of twelve resource mentors (four at each building) to model and mentor in the three areas listed above. For example, at the K-5 level, we expect to identify an expert to support struggling and reluctant learners, an expert in enrichment strategies, an expert in reading, and an expert in behavior strategies. These resource mentors will remain in the classroom to model exemplary practice, and be available to mentor as needed the professional development of colleagues. These teachers will receive an extended contract, stipend, and early release opportunities. Third, we intend to hire fifteen PLC leaders (five at each building) who will become district advocates for PLC work, facilitating PLC meetings and organizing critical conversations across the district, using the work of Richard and Rebecca DuFour and Robert Eaker. Those seeking these leadership positions will be offered an extended contract, stipend, and early release opportunities.

This MVCSD TLC team of 29 teacher leaders would specialize on specific tasks related to improving student performance, yet work collectively on impacting the culture and climate of this district through a renewed emphasis on teacher leadership. Supporting effective teaching through professional development will now be possible as leadership responsibilities have been extended beyond traditional channels to those teachers who wish to assume additional responsibilities and who are capable of adding significant expertise to improve teaching and learning within the school district.

The MVCSD was established in 1840, fifteen years before the Cedar Rapids Community School District. We operate under a traditional staffing pattern for 1,300 students. We do not have a curriculum director, a talented and gifted coordinator, professional development director, reading coaches or instructional coaches. For a variety of reasons, the MVCSD remains proud and territorial--reluctant to upgrade current facilities, increase staff, add advanced placement courses or online instruction, and connect with its hilltop neighbor, Cornell College.

Our staff is outstanding. There is an amazing work ethic in the Mount Vernon Community School District as teachers work quietly and independently on behalf of their students. Like teachers in many districts, we operate within an environment of "hollowed collegiality," where it is socially acceptable to view the work of others from a distance in a non-judgmental manner, without a true understanding of coherence or purpose. In this system, adults work separately, hopeful that their good faith efforts are sufficient. Systems have protected this independence and it has become an embedded expectation that adult learning is left to individuals. In turn, many of us, particularly at the secondary level, are left to make decisions independently using an expertise of experience that is rarely challenged by peers.

It is time for our school district to engage in thoughtful conversations about improvements to the educational program. The additional \$331,141.51 in teacher leadership funds would support a plan using instructional coaches, resource mentors, and PLC leaders to support the best of teacher leadership inside and outside the classroom. The time is right for an influx of ideas, energy and resources. The teacher association (MVEA) is a true partner with the district in terms of providing teacher leadership opportunities that provide improved services to the educational program.

Please recognize our challenge of celebrating tradition while we embrace innovation. These grant funds will provide the momentum necessary for the Mount Vernon Community School District to demonstrate how new teacher leadership roles increase student achievement. This grant will provide the necessary resources to increase capacity for teacher leadership at a time when these resources are desperately needed. The school board, administration and staff understand that teacher leadership opportunities are now possible through revenue streams that were not available years ago.

This grant supports our district mission, aligns with current strategic goals, identifies needs and supports these needs with data. We have created a consensus for building change through positive conversations about ways to support student achievement. This TLC work will include a variety of teacher leadership opportunities for colleagues to support, encourage, enhance and promote staff development opportunities. As adults improve their craft, instruction improves and student achievement increases.

Please select the TLC model number that most closely resembles your district plan.

TLC Model Number

Model 3 Comparable Plan

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## Narrative

Using Part 1 application narrative from previous application? Yes

**Part 1 - Describe the planning process used by the district to develop your TLC plan. (5,000 characters maximum)**

**Please include the following information in your narrative:**

**a) A description of how the planning grant, if available, and the planning time was used to develop a high-quality plan.**

**b) A description of how each stakeholder group (teachers, administrators, and parents) engaged in the process and contributed to the development of the plan.**

**c) A description of the support for and commitment to the plan from each stakeholder group (teachers, administrators, and parents who are not a member of another stakeholder group).**

The Mount Vernon Community School District leveraged the planning grant to design a collaborative process for increasing professional development opportunities for teachers. In fact, the act of coming together to deliberate on the practical consequences of rethinking roles and responsibilities led to actual practice of the new roles for leadership which would emerge as a result of planning for the project. A series of discussions began in the fall of 2013 at association meetings, SIAC meetings, board meetings, and administrative meetings to determine if the district was capable of answering the call to teacher leadership reform efforts. These ideas were refined by the superintendent and the president of the Mount Vernon Education Association into a conceptual framework of best leadership ideas: a teacher leadership center, compensation for expanded teacher responsibilities, and purposeful peer visits.

In cooperation with the MVEA, a writing team was created with representatives from each building and this team met to discuss grant writing responsibilities. Over a ten day period, writing team members used webinars, rubrics, and website information to match the criteria of the grant to the goals of the school district. Department of Education guidelines and Grant Wood Education agency resources were very helpful during this writing stage. Each member of the writing team took responsibility for writing a section of the grant and was compensated \$250 for their time, expertise and experience. This stipend came from the planning grant. The superintendent took responsibility for writing the introduction, conclusion and budget.

The work of the writing team was passed to the Communication Council. The Communication Council consists of association representatives from each building who meet monthly with the superintendent and a school administrator. The Communication Council was asked to endorse the work of the writing team and enhance the ideas proposed. Substitute educators for Communication Council members were paid for by the planning grant.

The review of the TLC grant by Communication Council was forwarded to the Leadership Team (building principals). This was the first time the administrative team had the chance to review the grant. This was done intentionally. Teachers, not administrators, must design new roles and responsibilities for teachers to emerge as leaders within an organization. For administrators to lead this charge simply reinforces the old adage that they are first responders, more knowledgeable and more experienced to decide the form and function of leadership. This bias undermines an honest and authentic conversation of rethinking the role of teachers in leadership roles.

Our efforts to place teachers front and center on this grant application and our use of the planning grant to pay stipends, subs and workshop expenses means we have used planning resources as intended. The planning grant dollars were instrumental in designing opportunities during the school day and outside the school day to complete the grant application. After the review by the leadership team, the superintendent asked community members from SIAC, and the board president and vice-president, and Dean Borg, moderator of Iowa Press and past MV school board president, to scrutinize the grant and provide insights into resources necessary for implementation.

The writing group reconvened for a final reading of the grant to revisit their work. Revisions were reviewed and considered. To date, twenty-two individuals have participated in the development of this grant. Given that some individuals play multiple roles within the district, this means that sixteen teachers, ten parents, seven SIAC members, and five administrators have a vested interest in the development of this grant and a high degree of commitment and support for the funding of this project.

Our journey to answer the call for teacher reform efforts was a long and winding road. We worked to be inclusive and responsive, believing that a variety of perspectives would serve our district well in the end. We believe in these ideas and we will work diligently to provide our teachers the opportunity to become serious decision-makers who make important leadership decisions that improve student performance.

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## **Narrative**

Using Part 2 application narrative from previous submission?      No

**Part 2 - Describe the vision and goals your school district hopes to achieve through the implementation of the TLC plan. In your description, please explain the local context (including relevant student achievement data and existing goals) and how the plan will be tailored to that context while also working toward the statewide goals of the system. (5,000 characters maximum)**

**State Goals:**

- attract able/promising new teachers;
- retain effective teachers;
- promote collaboration among teachers;
- reward professional growth and effective teaching; and
- improve student achievement.

The Mount Vernon Community School District recognizes the strengths and talents already present among its educators, and this plan would allow for teachers to regularly share their skills and experiences. Our plan aligns with the State of Iowa's TLC program goals. Our plan is modeled after the Cedar Rapids Community School District Plan as the MVCS D superintendent served the CRCS D as deputy superintendent. Through its professional development and curricular practices, the district strives to improve the learning experience for all students. Recognizing that improved instruction is a primary factor for improved student performance, the Mount Vernon Community School District has a particular interest in supporting its teachers and helping them grow as leaders. To this end, we have customized a plan specific to our needs while encompassing a primary goal set forth by Iowa's Task Force on Teacher Leadership and Compensation: "a thoughtful system of professional supports and career pathways."

Continuous improvement is the common thread that runs through the Mount Vernon Community School District. The goals of our TL program will create a comprehensive TL system in Mount Vernon that accomplishes the following:

- Ensures all TL efforts have a positive impact on learning;
- Offers multiple elementary and secondary leadership opportunities;
- Includes teacher leadership opportunities ranging from introductory to advanced skill levels;
- Defines the job duties of instructional coaches, resource mentors, and PLC leaders;
- Provides initial training for all teacher leaders upon obtaining a leadership position;
- Provides annual feedback on teacher leader performance;
- Monitors and reports the work accomplished by all teacher leaders;
- Ensures teacher leaders have a key role in the ongoing management of the TLC Program.

All teachers will be paid at least \$33,500. Teacher leadership positions to support children, the curriculum and professional development will attract new teachers, retain effective teachers, promote collaboration among teachers, reward professional growth and effective teaching and improve student achievement.

Teacher retention will be enhanced through access to TL positions as well as comprehensive PD. TL positions will foster collaboration among teachers allowing them to improve their instructional skills while learning and practicing strategies to bring out the best in their colleagues. As teacher leaders demonstrate growth, they will have access to increased leadership responsibilities. All TL positions have been designed to positively impact student learning. These positions are aligned with the district goals and school improvement plans. We identified teacher leader roles with varying levels of responsibility and time commitments. We used a tiered approach to meet the personal and professional needs of teachers at multiple entry points, with compensation commensurate with each position.

Our school improvement plans support local student needs and address state and federal accountability. We believe all K-12 students will achieve at high levels in reading, math, science, and technology. Trend data in our district indicate that 84% of all students exceed state standards in reading and math in each of the last seven years. Our students feel safe in school, appreciated, comfortable, connected and challenged.

The mission of the MVCS D is to promote excellence in academics, arts and athletics. We pride ourselves in the performance of our students. Aligned with this mission is the conviction that recruiting and retaining high quality teachers can increase student performance and promote excellence in educational practice. We believe it is our responsibility to support the professional development of staff so that every teacher improves his/her instructional practice. At our August 2014 all staff workshop, we emphasized the theme of "Getting Better" by documenting progress on school improvement plans, detailing a collective commitment to continuous improvement, a willingness to challenge current practices, and a conviction that our efforts make a difference; second, we celebrated the importance of the TLC grant by describing the impact these resources would have on school climate, pledging to turn insights into actions, investing in teacher leadership at the building level, and testing new ideas based on feedback we received from students.

Our district is learning from the PLC journey of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. While we do not have the SINA/DINA resources available in that larger district, we have examined a number of research based processes used there organized by Solution Tree. To that end, our Communication Council and District Leadership Council have supported district efforts to design a TLC plan which will include full release instructional coaches, full release induction coaches (through the consortium at GWAEA), mentors, model teachers, and PLC facilitators. These tiers of teacher leadership will work collaboratively with teachers and the district administrative team through building leadership teams and the instructional services team.

Building capacity where it is needed the most will reward professional growth, increase effective teaching, and improve student achievement. Our committee chose the Comparable Plan model to achieve the following goals under the district's Teacher Leadership Plan: improve student learning through systematic and comprehensive instructional coaching; establish a PLC culture that is supported by job-embedded professional development aligned to the Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM); ensure that all students are provided access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum based on the Iowa Core; develop the capacity of teachers to provide personalized learning experience for all students through an MTSS framework; and support the growth and development of teachers new to our profession through a personalized multi-year mentoring and induction program.

Using Part 3 application narrative from previous submission? No

**Part 3 - Describe how the TLC plan will connect to, support and strengthen the districts key school improvement structures, processes, and initiatives such as MTSS, Early Literacy Initiative (ELI), and/or Iowa Core implementation. (5,000 characters maximum)**

The Mount Vernon Community School District TLC plan will improve teaching and learning as educators commit to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Many (2006).

First, the Mount Vernon Community School District TLC plan will connect to district school improvement efforts to improve teaching and learning.

The TLC will increase academic support, increase curricular enrichment/intervention opportunities, and promote professional development for colleagues. Teachers want to work in a collegial and supportive environment, to collaborate and improve their craft, and to be encouraged, challenged and rewarded. Students want the same sense of satisfaction: they want their efforts to result in improved performance. When teaching and learning improve, both teachers and students benefit.

Second, the Mount Vernon Community School District TLC plan will strengthen current work in professional development. To inform and improve professional practice, all MVCSD teachers and staff will receive:

- Timely and frequent feedback in the achievement of their students
- In meeting an agreed-upon standard
- On a valid assessment
- In comparison to others.

According to DuFour, DuFour and Eaker (2010), frequent and timely monitoring of student learning is an essential part of effective teaching. Good teachers are assessing all the time. Students and teachers benefit if periodically formative assessments are created by a collaborative team of teachers, rather than an individual and given to all the students for whom that team is responsible.

Third, the Mount Vernon Community School District TLC plan will support three of the district's four goals:

- develop a continuous improvement process for curricular content, instructional method, and assessment.
- develop personalized student learning plans focusing on the whole child – social/emotional and mental health.
- strengthen integration of technology to improve staff and student learning.

The first three goals support student success. Each site within the district (PK-4, 5-8, and 9-12) has developed unique school improvement goals to meet these board initiatives. Instructional coaches will support district efforts to improve vertical articulation. The elementary and middle schools would benefit from collaboration between schools, with an instructional coach serving as a bridge between grade levels and across disciplines, overseeing curriculum development and the incorporation of effective instructional strategies. Furthermore, the instructional coaches would work directly in classrooms demonstrating characteristics of effective instruction.

The introduction of resource mentors will provide additional support for teachers challenged to individualize within a group setting. Teachers can be provided more resources by instructional coaches, resource mentors, and PLC leaders to address issues faced by struggling or reluctant learners. While induction coaches can provide support for new teachers, where is the constant and continued support for those who have been in the classroom for years? Where is their professional support?

The promise of professional learning communities will serve as the conceptual framework for much of our work. DuFour's four fundamental questions (What do we want students to know? How will we know when they know it? What do we do when they know it? and What do we do when they don't?) drive critical conversations about our work, while the Iowa Core defines the learning outcomes for our students. The MTSS provides the multi-tiered leadership roles and responsibilities which provide leadership implementing programs like the full release mentoring, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills/technology literacy curriculum for lifelong learners. Too often initiatives are fragmented and separate, PLC work provides scaffolding for connecting these efforts in meaningful and productive ways.

We welcome the opportunity to use the TLC grant to support, strengthen and integrate key school improvement structures, processes and initiatives. Teachers deal with multiple responsibilities simultaneously. For example, which teacher in Iowa has not been challenged by the multiple expectations of increased accountability? The TLC grant is an attempt to offer support when needed to confront the challenges of improving teaching and learning.

Using Part 4 application narrative from previous submission? Yes

**Part 4 - Describe how the TLC plan will utilize teacher leaders and the additional funding to improve entry into the teaching profession for new teachers. Include in your response an analysis of the effectiveness of the current induction and mentoring program and the evidence you used to make this determination, areas of improvement needed in the current program and how your TLC plan will address these gaps. (5,000 characters maximum)**

New teachers bring energy, enthusiasm, and fresh ideas to the classroom; however, new teachers have a specific set of needs. By effectively addressing these areas of need while utilizing the support of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation Grant (TLC), the Mount Vernon Community School District will help new teachers improve their confidence and skills through mentoring and personal connections with teacher leaders. This meets the intent of the grant which is to improve student learning through best practice instruction. Student achievement will grow and new teachers will feel supported enabling long-term retention of high quality educators. Experience makes a significant difference in teaching and learning for *both* students and teachers.

Currently, the Mount Vernon District's Induction Program is provided by the Grant Wood Area Education Agency (GWAEA). A new teacher is paired with an experienced teacher, working as a full-time instructional coach for GWAEA. This instructional coach comes from outside the Mount Vernon Community School District. The teacher and instructional coach meet once per week. During these visits the instructional coach observes, answers questions, and offers support. Meeting times may occur during classroom instruction or preparation time, depending on the purpose of the visit. Most discussions revolve around the Iowa Teaching Standards. The benefit and effectiveness of this support as it relates to the Iowa Teaching Standards and the completion of the New Teacher Portfolio is solid. However, after consultation with teachers new to the Mount Vernon District within the last two years, four gaps in the current Induction Program have emerged.

1. The assigned GWAEA Instructional coach does not necessarily match the new teacher's content area of instruction. For example, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading teacher is paired with a high school science teacher. New teachers may know their subject matter, but often have questions about how to best present the content. Teacher leaders within the district given release time by a substitute would provide a more authentic learning experience for the beginning teacher, resulting in greater student achievement.
2. New teachers often feel like they are living in a "sink or swim" environment, with little time for interaction with colleagues. The current induction program offers weekly visits by the GWAEA Instructional coach. More personalized and continuous support can be offered by in-district teacher leaders. Most often, these teachers are literally one or two doors down the hall.
3. Research shows the biggest challenge for new teachers is classroom management. Ideas and support given from a colleague within the Mount Vernon District would prove to be much more beneficial. In this situation, mentor teachers and new teachers are working in the same culture and often dealing with the same students.
4. The greatest deficit of the current induction program is that only two teachers are gaining the benefit of rich conversations and informative observations about great teaching. Within the proposed model, teacher leaders would be meeting with the new teacher in a one on one setting on a regular basis, as well as working with this person as a member of the PLC. The teacher leader and the new teacher would be able to utilize the PLC structure to gain more ideas and feedback.

The funding provided through the TLC grant provides new teachers with coaching, mentoring and opportunities for observing best practices from exceptional teachers within the Mount Vernon District. Peer observation will be expected of *all* teachers. Seeing our peers in action will allow for an exchange of ideas and important feedback among colleagues. These observations will create content-rich discussions during Professional Learning Communities and professional development days. The instructional coach and a professional development specialist will work in collaboration with building principals and teacher leaders to facilitate and organize a structure which maximizes professional learning. The district will specifically utilize additional TLC funds to address the four gaps noted above, by:

1. Assigning a current Mount Vernon teacher leader to be a mentor teacher within the grade level or instructional content area of any first or second year teacher. It will be required for new teachers to observe numerous teachers within the district. This will only add to their "toolbox" and enhance their skills as an educator. Additional substitutes will be hired to release 90 district teachers to observe exceptional teaching within the Mount Vernon District. The power of this practice lies in the reflection, feedback, and conversation among teachers. It will be an expectation that all teachers participate. Professional Learning Communities and Professional Development days will be structured for the instructional coach and professional development specialist to work side by side with the teacher leaders and principals.
- 2.
2. The time allotted will be for rich discussion about teacher observations, classroom management, behavior management, instructional strategies, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, or technology. Most importantly, student data gathered from formative and summative assessments will be analyzed. Teachers will collaborate and make important instructional decisions based on the student data. The instructional coach, professional development specialist, and teacher leaders will aid the teachers in developing methods and strategies to address the student needs derived from the data.

While the emphasis for this section of the TLC plan is on mentoring new teachers, it was essential to involve all teachers. 100% participation among the staff will ensure that the structure and content of professional learning days will address all of the Mount Vernon School Board, district, and building goals.

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## Narrative

Using Part 5 application narrative from previous submission? Yes

**Part 5 - Describe each of the proposed teacher leadership roles in your plan. (10,000 characters maximum)**

**Please include the following information in your narrative:**

- a) A description of the responsibilities and duties for each new leadership role as well as the percentage of time each role will spend engaged in student instruction and the percentage of time each role will spend performing teacher leader duties.**
  
- b) A description of how each of the new roles fit together, as well as with any existing teacher leadership roles, to create a coherent instructional improvement strategy that will strengthen instruction and improve student learning and student achievement throughout the district.**

The Mount Vernon Community School District focused on the specific section of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation plan to “promote collaboration by developing and supporting opportunities for teachers in schools and school districts statewide to learn from each other.”

The planning committee chose this focus because there has been a limited, but very positive, experience with peer visits in two of the three buildings in the district. Tapping into the excellence that is happening in classrooms by career level teachers was seen as a natural next step. We wish to create a Teacher Leadership Center, located next to the district office within the middle school, where instructional coaches and curriculum enrichment specialists would work in teams to enhance teaching and learning.

The responsibility of the instructional coach will be to advocate for continuous improvement of instructional practice and to facilitate the implementation of School Improvement Plans (SIP). At the elementary, these goals include increasing proficiency by 3% on the DIBELS reading assessments by May of 2015. Teachers engage in teaming each week to focus on student data and meeting the needs of all learners. They are also training to administer and analyze all assessments used for reading. Teachers also plan for intervention groups (RTI) outside of the core instruction. The instructional coach would work with grade level teams to ensure that progress is made toward achieving the SIP at the elementary. The middle school's SIP focuses on embedding technology into all aspects of life and learning. Students and teachers are to become leaders in using technology in authentic and innovative ways. The instructional coach would meet with grade level teams to direct conversations, instruction and coaching to facilitate the continuous improvement toward the middle school's technology SIP goal.

The instructional coaches would be the champion for organizing elementary and middle school peer visits within the district. Peer visits have been a positive experience at the middle school and elementary buildings. Having an instructional coach in charge of scheduling and facilitating this experience will encourage it on a broader scale with a rich follow-up conversation. The goal would be to also encourage these visits to happen between buildings so that there can be a greater vertical awareness and appreciation of instructional practices. Mount Vernon is fortunate to have some very strong teachers who work on continuous improvement. Having those teachers share the skills they have developed, that have resulted in high student involvement and achievement is a goal of the instructional coach. Having an instructional coach to facilitate the peer visits would make this desire in words turn into a practice of improvement. The instructional coach would facilitate continuous improvement which supports the district, building and instructor goals of the Mount Vernon Community School District.

The curriculum enrichment specialists would facilitate peer visits at the secondary level. Unfortunately, secondary planning time is individualized with little team planning time or grade level meetings built into the regular schedule. Peer visits would encourage the teachers at the secondary level to open the doors and observe their peers and best instructional practices. The professional development specialist would facilitate follow-up conversations so that teachers had a chance to discuss what was observed and what was practiced. This conversation greatly enhances the experience for both instructors. The professional development specialist would also help the high school toward recognizing and achieving the SIP goal for its building, curriculum renewal and improving student voice in high school initiatives. Secondary teachers are subject matter experts but the professional development specialist would have the time to search for new ways to enhance instruction. New professional development might include coordinating a PLC study for enhancing instruction through a greater integration of technology or providing guidance toward differentiating instruction for learners in the secondary classroom.

The professional development specialist will work to link the district goal of continuous improvement of curricular content, instruction, and assessment with the school's improvement plans for both the middle school and high school by designing key professional development opportunities. This position will provide support for the integration of technology, best practice in the classroom, and support the middle and high school's continuous work on core curriculum content alignment. These are existing goals of each building. Common assessments will be a focus for this position and will assure consistency across the district. The professional development specialist will also be a liaison between staff, administration and the board, documenting progress towards meeting the school board's district goals. Similar to the instructional coach at the elementary level, the professional development specialist will work in tandem with all of the secondary teachers. It is essential for the professional development specialist to build capacity among the staff by providing 21<sup>st</sup> century strategies to prepare students for a global economy.

These roles fit together to create a coherent instructional improvement strategy that would strengthen instruction and improve student achievement and student learning throughout the district. The instructional coach and professional development specialist will work very closely together. They would be responsible for improving communication, clarity and cooperation between the elementary and secondary levels. Our middle school serves grades 5-8, offering both a bridge between levels to align district and building goals. Keeping these goals relevant and a part of the living language at the elementary and secondary levels will help us facilitate peer conversations on ways to honor and support district work. These two new positions will provide a structure and organization that our district does not currently provide. An instructional coach and professional development specialist will provide a focus that will promote collaboration by developing and supporting opportunities for teachers in schools and school districts statewide to learn from each other by honoring best practice in elementary and secondary.

Using Part 6 application narrative from previous submission?

Yes

**Part 6 - Describe how teacher leaders will be selected. (5,000 characters maximum)**

**Please include descriptions of how the district will determine and evaluate the following in selecting teacher leaders:**

**a) Prior demonstrated measures of effectiveness.**

**b) Prior demonstrated professional growth.**

The Mount Vernon Community School District will utilize leadership groups already in place to create a process for the hiring of an instructional coach and professional development specialist per negotiated agreements. The process of selecting candidates and conducting interviews will follow the procedure that has been implemented in the past when hiring new employees.

The criteria for selection of teacher leaders will be based on proven effectiveness in the classroom as well as established dedication to continued professional development. Classroom effectiveness will be measured using multiple sources including student performance, administrative observations and evaluations, and parent and student feedback. Teachers will be required to submit evidence of classroom effectiveness in the above outlined areas. Professional development proficiency will be based on participation of outside the district professional development courses, participation in district-wide professional development programs, leadership roles in the area of professional development and both peer and administrative observations. Candidates for teacher leaders will show professional development proficiency by submitting transcripts, completion of course certificates and enrollment information for continued learning. Candidates will also be recognized for work on district and building level committees and teams.

Each teacher who is interested in applying to be a teacher leader will be responsible for completing an application. The specific details of the application for teacher leaders will be decided upon on by the following groups: building leadership teams, district leadership team, and school improvement advisory committee in conjunction with the district administrators. The ultimate goal of the application is to identify teachers who are effective collaborators, strong communicators, and able to motivate peers and students alike. They are also expected to be proficient teachers who are committed to continued learning through professional development. Each teacher who applies will be required to submit an application along with a selection of documents to substantiate classroom efficacy and professional development. The types of documents will include items such as transcripts of professional development coursework, samples of assignments/units, assessment data to show student growth and evidence of collaboration within a team or department. Applicants will also be required to write a personal statement outlining ways in which teacher leadership can be fostered within our district and used to promote best practice in instruction, as well as increase student achievement. The criteria for selection of teacher leaders will be based on proven effectiveness in the classroom as well as established dedication to continued professional development. Classroom effectiveness will be measured using multiple sources including student performance, administrative observations, parent and student feedback, and peer evaluations. Professional development proficiency will be based on participation of outside the district professional development courses, participation in district-wide professional development programs, leadership roles in the area of professional development and both peer and administrative observations.

Once the applications have been submitted, the applications and submitted documents will be reviewed by a teacher leader selection committee made up of an equal number of administrators, teachers and members from the School Improvement Advisory Committee. Any candidate submitting an application to be a teacher leader will not be able to serve on the selection committee. The selection committee will review all of the applications and documents selected and make the final selections for teacher leaders in the best interest of the district.

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## **Narrative**

**Using Part 7 application narrative from previous submission?** No

**Part 7 - Describe how the TLC plan will utilize teacher leaders to improve the districts current professional development program. (5,000 characters maximum)**

**Please include the following information in your narrative:**

**a) A description of the role teacher leaders will play in the creation and delivery of professional development.**

**b) A description of how the districts TLC plan aligns with and incorporates the key elements of the Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM).**

*Click here To access the Iowa Professional Development Model page.*

In the Mount Vernon Community School District, our teachers play a critical role in the development, design, implementation and evaluation of PD. We work to customize PD to inform practice to better meet the needs of our students. Our TLC vision is to design a differentiated teacher leadership system that strengthens instructional skills and builds a collaborative culture of continuous improvement using instructional coaches, resource mentors, and PLC leaders.

The TLC plan's inclusion of differentiated teacher leader roles and responsibilities supports the research of Joyce and Showers (2002) on the five components of effective staff development: presentation of theory/description of new skill; modeling new strategy; feedback on performance; and coaching.

It is critical that our teachers have time to meet during their contract day. Common preparation time, parallel scheduling, adjusted start and end times, shared classes, group activities, banking time, and in-service time are ways organizations can make time for collaboration (DuFour, 2006). Every teacher has a responsibility to demonstrate professional learning aligned to the IPDM, a model of continuous improvement, through the implementation of district initiatives.

PLC leaders will:

- Become district advocates for PLC work.
- Become district resource for using DuFour's Critical Issues template.
- Facilitate PLC meetings by setting the agenda, inviting all knowledgeable others and administrators that are needed, as well as reviewing assignments of team members before leaving the meeting.
- Accompany grade or subject alike team members during peer observations. (Having multiple people observe and process the same lesson increases the strength of impact for change).
- Record patterns of behavior, patterns of questions and concerns during paired peer observations.
- Team with administrative team to plan professional development based on their findings during meetings/paired peer observations.

PLC leaders will collect and analyze student data, support teachers in identifying student and professional learning SMART goals, and determine professional development goals and district goals for C-Plan.

Resource mentors will:

- Become district resource for demonstrating exemplary practice.
- Provide site demonstrations of exemplary lessons.
- Be "on call" for individual professional development questions.
- Support administrators and instructional coaches with district professional development.
- Seek feedback from teachers on professional development needs.

Resource mentors will model and provide support for instructional decision-making. Instructional coaches will support teacher use of data to guide instruction.

Instructional coaches will:

- Become district resource for implementing TLC plan.
- Serve as clearinghouse of information about TLC plan.
- Conduct needs assessment of three underserved areas.
- Strategize improvement efforts for addressing underserved areas.
- Structure network of 29 TLC program members in support of TLC plan.
- Communicate collective efforts to staff, board, and public.
- Log progress, challenges and improvements.

All teachers in our district have Individual Professional Development Plans to drive their professional growth (IPDM Element 11). IPDP are an extensive peer review to help teachers measure their professional growth. The SI planning process in each building results in a detailed description of the PD to be provided by TLs (IPDM Element 12). TLs on each Building Leadership team ensure the building's PD plan is responsive to the building's goals and action steps are crafted to address student learning needs.

Alignment of TLC Plan with Iowa PD Model—Our comprehensive TLC program incorporates the twelve essential elements of the Iowa PD model. The Iowa PD model Technical Guide describes the importance of: (1) a Leadership Team; (2) collecting and analyzing student data; (3) goal setting; (4) selecting content; (5) designing PD; (6) an ongoing cycle of training; (7) collaboration; (8) study of implementation; (9) formative data collection; (10) program evaluation; (11) individual teacher PD plans; and (12) attendance center PD plans.

Our Building Leadership Teams (IPDM Element will design all PD in response to SI plans to maximize the ability of instructional staff to address student learning needs (IPDM Element 5). PD at the building level supports the use of a continuous cycle of improvement to help students learn—analyze student work, set SMART goals, implement instructional strategies, monitor student growth, adjust interventions (IPDM Element 2). With TLC funding, our two instructional coaches will help teachers analyze student data, set SMART goals for student and staff learning, and implement the intended curriculum (IPDM Elements 2, 3, & 4).

Teacher leaders will be selected by the application process outlined in Part 6 of the grant. They will be given an agreed upon stipend for their service throughout the year. Additionally, teacher leaders will be given up to 12 hours of release or per diem pay per month to meet with other teacher leaders and the instructional coach or professional development specialist to plan for professional development, analyze data and look for patterns across grade levels and subject areas.

Our plan aligns with the Iowa Professional Development Model's key elements of curriculum, instruction and assessment by requiring peer visits and allowing for paired peer visits. We will address multiple concerns through weekly collaboration meetings that are focused on

assessment and instruction while taking into account research based strategies to increase student achievement. The focus of all meetings will be meeting the needs of all students while doing this in multiple ways and using all resources available.

**Using Part 8 application narrative from previous submission?** Yes

**Part 8 - Given the state and school district goals, please provide the following information: (5,000 characters maximum)**

**a) A description of how the district will determine the impact/effectiveness of the TLC plan, including short-term and the long-term measures.**

**b) A description of how the district will monitor and adjust the TLC plan based on the results of these measures.**

The Mount Vernon Community School District has a clear vision how it will measure the impact and effectiveness of achieving the goals described in the plan. We expect to provide salient features to our stakeholders regarding changes made, the corresponding results and the match between perceived and actual gains.

- Level Teams in each building will meet on a weekly basis and building and district leadership teams will meet on a monthly basis to determine the short-term impact/effectiveness of our districts TLC plan PLC/Grade. Emerging themes, narratives, information, and observations will be documented and shared in a public and predictable manner.
- The PLC/Grade Level meetings will be facilitated by the teacher leader and will include a discussion of classroom observations, co-teaching experiences, integration of technology, and the collection of classroom data related to the TLC goals. This data will consist of formative and summative classroom assessments measuring student performance. The teacher leaders will communicate relevant information and data to the building and district leadership teams.
- The district leadership team's monthly meetings will be used to compile and review data, problem solve, and adjust the TLC plan as needed. They will discuss classroom observations and teacher feedback. This team will also use district MAP data, which is collected three times a year, to evaluate student achievement for both short and long-term effectiveness of the TLC Plan.
- A beginning and end of the year survey of teachers that would include questions regarding instructional practices, integration of technology, collaboration with colleagues, classroom observations, co-teaching practices, and professional development would be used as data to evaluate the impact of the TLC plan.
- Asking students to complete a beginning and end of the year survey containing similar questions about teacher effectiveness and the integration of technology would be another measure of effectiveness.
- Long-term impact/effectiveness would also be determined by analyzing district assessments (MAP and Iowa Assessments) over time and collaborating with similar districts with PLC programs to compare.
- Based on short and long-term measures of impact and effectiveness the PLC plan would be adjusted to accommodate each of the district's buildings through the building and district leadership teams and the school board. The short and long-term monitoring and adjustment by these groups would ensure the implementation fidelity and effectiveness of the PLC Plan.
- The building and district leadership teams and building and district administration will report to SIAC and the school board regarding the long-term impact/effectiveness of the TLC plan.

Program evaluation includes an analysis of progress over time and documentation of adjustments made over time. Such adjustments, designed to improve the delivery of services based on appropriate feedback, will be described as an integral part of lessons learned from the changes made.

**Using Part 9 application narrative from previous submission?** No

**Part 9 - Describe the school district's capacity to implement the TLC plan. Cite an example or examples of the successful implementation of a past district initiative or initiatives. Include how the TLC plan will move into the future systemically as a part of the districts school improvement efforts including descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of district personnel responsible for ensuring the success of the plan. (5,000 characters maximum)**

### **Capacity to Implement and Sustain TLC Plan**

Momentum in professional development will build as 29 teacher leaders serve as instructional coaches, resource mentors, and PLC leaders. We believe we have targeted underserved areas which deserve improvement and which will demonstrate a significant impact on student performance. Sustaining this work is more likely when there is evidence that our efforts made a difference. It is important to remember that the TLC is more than an addition of resources; it is a different use of resources to build capacity in leadership.

Our work with induction coaches in the GWAEA full release consortium model has taught us of the importance of providing weekly support for beginning teachers. This network of schools using a research-based approach for induction from the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, California is an example of a successful implementation of a school improvement effort in the MVCSD. We learned that leadership for teachers comes through a direct connection to the classroom by designing a structure which encourages the interactions of professionals in a consistent and structured way. We learned of the significant impact of placing additional adult support directly in classrooms.

The addition of teacher leadership positions will support the current MVCSD practice where teachers regularly combine classes and co-teach sections, create grade level end of year tests, design common assessments created for multiple sections, mentor during challenging times, organize grade level class meetings and share resources. Numerous MVCSD teachers open their classrooms for observers from Cornell, volunteer work and community members sharing educational insights. These district efforts are possible because of the healthy and productive willingness of educators to open their classroom doors to others.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of District Personnel**

- The superintendent, principals, and the TLC Program Evaluation and Monitoring Committee are responsible for the successful implementation of the TLC plan.

### **Responsibilities of Instructional Coaches (2 teachers)**

- Become district resource for implementing TLC plan.
- Serve as clearinghouse of information about TLC plan.
- Conduct needs assessment of three underserved areas.
- Strategize improvement efforts for addressing underserved areas.
- Structure network of 29 TLC program members in support of TLC plan.
- Communicate collective efforts to staff, school board, and public.
- Log progress, challenges and improvements.

### **Responsibilities of Resource Mentors (12 teachers)**

- Become district resource for demonstrating exemplary practice.
- Provide site demonstrations of exemplary lessons.
- Be "on call" for individual professional development questions.
- Support administrators and instructional coaches with district professional development.
- Seek feedback from teachers on professional development needs.

### **Responsibilities of PLC Leaders (15 teachers)**

- Become district advocates for PLC work.
- Become district resource for using DuFour's Critical Issues template.
- Facilitate PLC meetings by setting the agenda, inviting all knowledgeable others and administrators that are needed, as well as reviewing assignments of team members before leaving the meeting.
- Accompany grade or subject alike team members during peer observations. (Having multiple people observe and process the same lesson increases the strength of impact for change).
- Record patterns of behavior, patterns of questions and concerns during paired peer observations.
- Team with administrative team to plan professional development based on their findings during meetings/paired peer observations.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring Committee**

- Establish a program review criteria for the review of program quality.
- Make annual recommendations for continuous improvement of the TLC plan.
- Review TLC job descriptions and responsibilities.
- Summarize stakeholder input on progress of TLC plan.

### **School Board will:**

- Support a differentiated system of teacher leadership where coaches, mentors, model teachers, and teacher leaders can work directly with colleagues to improve teaching and learning.
- Support peer visits to classroom to watch colleagues in action.
- Support compensating teachers for work outside their classroom and by redirecting their classroom responsibilities by 7.5% or 1.5 days out of the classroom each month.

### **Superintendent will:**

- Support the selection of teacher leaders in the application process outlined in Part 6 of the grant.
- Organize the selection committee and the evaluation and monitoring committee.
- Meet quarterly with instructional coaches and building principals to document progress.

- Meet each semester with resource mentors to summarize progress.
- Meet each semester with PLC leaders to document progress.
- Coordinate and assist summer learning for teacher leaders.

**Building principals will:**

- Ensure that all teacher leader candidate applications are screened to meet the qualifications defined in the TLC grant process.
- Review all teacher leadership job descriptions to support work responsibilities.
- Support work of instructional coaches, resources experts, and PLC leaders.

**Sustainability and Funding for the Program**

Responsive leadership in Mount Vernon requires a sustainable and systemic rethinking of the roles and responsibilities of those in leadership positions. The TLC grant requires a thoughtful analysis of how teacher leadership demonstrates commitment for improving student performance.

- Weekly collaboration times built into common planning time.
- Communication about progress, setback, challenges and successes.
- Organized meetings where accomplishments are documented.
- Summaries of accomplishments publicized for all to see.
- Public celebrations on website of lessons learned.
- Board reports updating the community on progress made.

**Part 10 - Budget Items**

<b>Use of TLC Funds</b>	<b>Amount Budgeted</b>
Amount used to raise the minimum salary to \$33,500.	\$0.00
Amount designated to fund the salary supplements for teachers in leadership roles.	\$241,000.00
Amount to cover the costs for the time teachers in leadership roles are not providing direct instruction in a classroom and to cover the costs when teachers are out of their classroom to observe or co-teach with another teacher (e.g. hiring emeritus, part-time, or full-time teachers).	\$40,000.00
Amount used to provide professional development related to the leadership pathways.	\$50,141.51
Amount used to cover other costs associated with the approved teacher leadership and compensation plan. <i>These costs must be itemized and described below and be approved by the Iowa Department of Education prior to implementation of your plan.</i>	\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$331,141.51</b>

**Grant Allocation**

Enter the district enrollment as reported on Line 7 of the **2014** Certified Enrollment Report. Actual funding will be based on the 2016 CE once it is approved by the SBRC. An amended budget will be submitted if the application is approved.

*To enter the district's certified enrollment number, select "Edit" at the top of the screen. Once the enrollment field is completed, select "Save" to view the Grant Allocation. Then enter the Budget Items and Other Budget Uses in the space provided.*

Certified Enrollment Number 1072.28

The district enrollment-based allocation is equal to the certified enrollment number x \$308.82.

District Enrollment-Based Allocation \$331,141.51

Total Allocation \$331,141.51

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## Other Budgeted Uses - Description

Item description	Amount budgeted
	\$0.00

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## Total Allocation Budgeted

Total Projected Amount to be Expended \$331,141.51

If the amount shown below is **(negative)**, the sum total of the dollar amounts budgeted exceeds the enrollment-based allocation.

Remaining Allocation to be Budgeted \$0.00

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## Budget Alignment

Using Part 10 application narrative from previous application? No

Describe how the TLC budget is aligned to the school districts goals for the proposed TLC system. The budget narrative should make clear connections between costs, roles and goals. (5,000 characters maximum)

The Mount Vernon Community School District will use the resources of this grant to move to a structured and differentiated system of teacher leadership which will strengthen instruction and improve student performance. We propose the addition of teacher leadership positions in three underserved areas: 1. teacher leaders to support students struggling with social and emotional issues that have become barriers to learning; 2. teacher leaders to support direct instruction within classrooms for academic and behavior support for intervention and enrichment; and 3. teacher leaders to support professional development of teachers on creative, engaging and innovative practices. These new leadership roles will shape collaborative learning opportunities within the school setting. Moreover, these teams will provide a must needed catalyst for change providing direct services to teachers and students who have been traditionally underserved.

Teacher leaders will be identified based on the three leadership roles: instructional coaches, resource mentors, and PLC leaders. Two instructional coaches, one K-6 and one 7-12, will organize district improvement efforts for addressing the three areas listed above. These are full release positions with an extended contract and an additional stipend. Twelve resource mentors (four at each building) will serve as experts in one of the three areas listed above. These teachers remain in the classrooms and are compensated for additional work in professional development. Fifteen PLC leaders (five at each building) will become district advocates for PLC work, facilitating PLC meetings and organizing critical conversations across the district, using the work of Richard and Rebecca DuFour and Robert Eaker. These teachers remain in the classroom and are compensated for additional work. Using DuFour's Critical Issues for Team Considerations as a template guide, PLC leaders will engage colleagues in the power of professional learning communities, believing that "the path to change in the classroom lies within and through professional learning communities" (McLaughlin, 1995).

Primary responsibilities for each leadership role include the following:

Coach: Two instructional coaches, one K-6 and one 7-12. No teaching assignment, full time teacher under contract, fifteen day extended contract with \$10,000 stipend. Will provide direction to district professional learning community work and move district toward addressing the three identified underserved areas. **Cost: \$160,000**

Resource mentor: Twelve resource mentors for professional development, four at each building (ES, MS, HS). Will remain in classroom on full-time teaching contract, be given five day extended contract with \$3,000 stipend. Will work with building principals on professional development needs. **Cost: \$36,000**

Leader: Fifteen leaders, five at each building (ES, MS, HS). Will remain in classroom on full-time teaching contract, be given five day extended contract with \$3,000 stipend. Will organize peer review visits across districts and plan and deliver research based professional development of DuFour's PLC work related to three underserved areas listed above. **\$45,000**

**160,000 + 36,000 + 45,000 = \$241,000**

**In addition, \$40,000 is budgeted to cover costs for FICA, IPERS, insurance costs, sub costs, expenses for teachers to observe or co-teach. \$50,141.51 remains for registration at DuFour PLC Institutes and/or workshops featuring the DuFours presented by Solution Tree.**

The Mount Vernon Community School District recognizes the strengths and talents already present among its educators, and this plan would allow for teachers to regularly share their skills, expertise and experiences. We wish to attract excellent teachers, retain these teachers in our system and promote collaboration through critical conversations which improves teaching and learning.

The selection process for teacher leadership roles will include a selection committee that includes teachers and administrators who shall accept and review applications for assignment or reassignment to a teacher leadership role and shall make recommendations regarding the applications to the superintendent of the school district.

The district will demonstrate a good-faith effort to attain participation by 25 percent of the teacher workforce in teacher leadership roles beyond the initial and career teacher levels.

Continuous improvement is the common thread that runs through professional development in the Mount Vernon Community School District.

Using the wisdom of teachers and valuing their experiences, expertise and practical knowledge, the district will improve student performance. We recognize the many contributions our teachers make to improve teaching and learning and we welcome their leadership. To this end, we have honored a primary goal set forth by Iowa's Task Force on Teacher Leadership and Compensation: "a thoughtful system of professional supports and career pathways."

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## Assurances

**Please check each of the boxes below. Your plan will not be considered for approval unless each of the boxes are checked, indicating your agreement to meet these requirements.**

**Minimum Salary** The school district will have a minimum salary of \$33,500 for all full-time teachers. **Yes**

Selection Committee The selection process for teacher leadership roles will include a selection committee that includes teachers and administrators who shall accept and review applications for assignment or reassignment to a teacher leadership role and shall make recommendations regarding the applications to the superintendent of the school district. Yes

Teacher Leader Percentage The district will demonstrate a good-faith effort to attain participation by 25 percent of the teacher workforce in teacher leadership roles beyond the initial and career teacher levels. Yes

Teacher Compensation A teacher employed in a school district shall not receive less compensation in that district than the teacher received in the school year preceding implementation of the districts TLC plan. Yes

Applicability the framework or comparable system shall be applicable to teachers in every attendance center operated by the school district. Yes