



Application

88360 - Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) System FY 2016

96223 - Teacher Leadership Model - The System for Teacher Leadership and Student Achievement

Teacher Leadership and Compensation System

Status: Under Review

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## Primary Contact

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Program Area of Interest

Teacher Leadership and Compensation System

Fax:

Agency

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## Organization Information

Organization Name:

Van Buren Community Schools

Organization Type:

K-12 Education

Tax ID:

42-6038084

DUNS:

04-614-3814

**Organization Website:** www.van-buren.k12.ia.us  
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**Benefactor**  
**Vendor Number**

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## Recipient Information

**District** Van Buren Community School District  
Use the drop-down menu to select the district name.

**County-District Number** 89-6592  
This field should fill automatically based on the choice above. If the number listed does not match with the district selected, contact Tom Cooley at 515-281-4700.

**Honorific** Dr.

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**State** Iowa  
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## TLC Application Contact

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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)**

Van Buren Community School District is located in rural Southeast Iowa. Together with 10 other Iowa counties, our district shares the Missouri border. With a total K-12 enrollment of 544 students and a certified enrollment of 628.4 students, nearly 50% of the population at the elementary qualifies for free and reduced lunches. The elementary building was designated as a School In Need of Assistance (SINA) for Math and is currently in the "Delay" status for Math and Reading. The district has experienced a drop in test scores in the last three years; however, some growth was evidenced on the most recent Iowa Assessment data. Even though growth has been demonstrated grades 4, 5, and 8 still do not have 80% or more students scoring in the proficient range in Reading. Grades 9 & 10 are also marginal at 81% proficient. In the area of math grades 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 continue to have fewer than 80% of students scoring in the proficient range. The district has adopted Common Core aligned reading and math materials in the past two years and has provided staff with professional development opportunities around Iowa Core Investigations and implementation strategies. The district also hired a half-time instructional coach at the elementary and a full-time technology integrationist to work with K-12 staff. These efforts are a good starting point, but a more systemic and foundational approach to mentoring, teacher leadership, coaching and improved instruction needs to be in place if we wish to see sustained gains in Core academic areas.

Twenty-eight percent of our 54 member certified staff are on the Van Buren Teacher Leadership and Professional Learning Committee and have been working together during the past two years to research, analyze, and design a high quality teacher leadership plan. The interest in this model originated from our SIAC sessions involving local area business and industry leaders as well as the research and work with our teachers. Stakeholders and business leaders shared their models of organizational and human capital development at the corporate and industry level; realizing that public education operates very differently and a more systematic and engaging process was needed for our teachers. Their input in regard to developing our teachers and in-turn, improving student achievement, led to the interest in the TAP (The System for Teacher and Student Achievement) model. Additionally, we centered on the TAP model due to the strength of the on-going professional development through our Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) component combined with a proven process to recruit, motivate, develop, and retain high quality teachers in order to increase student achievement.

We logged 35+ meetings which included webinar sessions, AEA training, Skype sessions with other schools who are implementing the TAP model, team meetings, professional learning team meetings, and team visits to Central Decatur and Saydel CSD to observe the TAP model in practice. Our decision to apply for the state Comparable option is based on the work accomplished by our committees, stakeholders, staff and district alignment and commitment with the TAP model.

The Van Buren Board of directors and staff are dedicated to putting this teacher leadership proposal into action in order to recruit and retain high quality staff members. Current demographics reveal 11 staff members have been on staff 20+ years, 3 have 16-20 years, 14 are 11-15 years and 11 have 6-10 years of service. However, 14 staff members are in the 0-5 years of service range; thus, increasing the need for a **quality** recruitment, mentoring, and retention approach. Therefore, the Van Buren district is committed to providing fiscal resources, administrative support, program space, supervision, and professional development opportunities to implement and sustain the Teacher Leadership and Compensation initiative. Raising our base salary will help attract quality graduates and provide our students with strong teachers in the classroom. Providing multiple professional pathways for our veteran career and master teachers will encourage their continued presence in our classrooms well into their careers. Quality professional development will ensure our students are receiving cutting edge curriculum through proven classroom instructional approaches

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

## **Narrative**

Using Part 1 application narrative from Year 1?

No

**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).

Our district used the planning grant and planning time over the last two years to develop a high quality plan for developing teacher leadership. Our process engaged key stakeholders through our SIAC, PLC, and CTE committees in the development of the plan, engaged a broader group in providing feedback, and helped to create broad support for our approach from a range of groups and individuals in our community. Our primary goal in this work is to create meaningful and impactful roles for teacher leaders that position them to help drive our overall academic and instructional goals. While we have long desired to more effectively engage teacher leaders, and to support principals in developing distributed leadership structures in their schools, achieving this goal among other competing demands has been a challenge. With the support offered by the state for a planning and engagement process, we have been able to work together with our stakeholders to see how we can better align academic and instructional goals with the way we deploy expertise and talent in our district. We have also used this process to develop a more effective approach to attracting and integrating new talent into this system.

28% of our staff participate on our Teacher Leadership committee and have been working together to research and plan our leadership model. Our committee is made up of elementary through high school teachers including parents and administration. We started early in the fall of 2013 as a TLC leadership team, breaking into smaller groups to read and research effective models of mentoring and tiered leadership. We researched full-release models of teacher leadership, Linda Darling-Hammond's research of professional development, and the research behind the TAP model. What gained the attention of our TLC committee and stakeholder groups, was the research and results behind the success of the TAP model. The TAP system incorporates both strategies that research studies have found to be effective—collaborative learning teams and instructional coaching (Biancarosa et. al, 2010; Sanders et. al, 2009). But, TAP also takes the next critical step by helping schools create an infrastructure that supports high-quality PD and ensures that the activities ultimately deliver positive results, both for teachers and for their students. The TAP system combines collaborative teams and classroom coaching to maximize the potential impact of both strategies. An assessment of our current state of collaboration and instructional coaching was simply not providing these results and we knew it was time to make changes.

The TLC committee and stakeholders conducted a needs assessment with our staff and parents to identify strengths and weaknesses in our current model. To summarize, we affirmed our suspicions that our current model of teacher leadership only existed in fragments when teachers voluntarily assisted building leadership when specific initiatives began, our model of coaching was limited to early literacy coaching at the elementary level and our other teachers were not provided with help and assistance, data, or reflective conversations around highly effective teaching practices that produce results. In addition, we utilized our planning grant to visit other schools, attend AEA-wide meetings to collaborate with area schools, and to send members of our leadership team to TAP model schools to see it in action. We have shared and kept our school board members involved throughout the entire process.

Once a draft plan was formed by the TLC committee, the district reached out to key stakeholder which included our AEA, CTE advisory committee, SIAC committee, and parents. Input from these stakeholder groups was gathered and assisted in our development and decision to commit to the TAP model. All administrators and PLC team leaders were involved through the process. Throughout the past 1.5 years, we have debriefed and gathered input from our entire staff during full PD days. They have helped frame the phases of learning, training, collaboration, and implementation of the TAP model. Recently, we spent time with Michael Derrick from the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching to learn other schools using the TAP model. His consultation was helpful in our journey to begin. We have logged 35+ meetings which have included webinar sessions, AEA training, SIAC and CTE committee meetings, Skype sessions with Saydel CSD leaders, professional learning team meetings, visits to Central Decatur and Saydel CSD to learn about the TAP model and see the implementation first-hand. Stakeholder groups (staff, parents, CTE advisory, SIAC, administration, and parents) reviewed the research, read the draft plan, provided input, and contributed to our survey data. Their collaboration with the core TLC committee resulted in have reviewed, researched, and collaborated on the 3 state suggested models for teacher leadership and compensation during professional development and in afterschool sessions. All stakeholders spent time learning about the research-based models of teacher leadership and mentoring. Our CTE advisory committee was very influential during our meetings and discussions and reviewed the survey data. As we researched and shared our findings, we aligned our information with our current state of career paths, mentoring and leadership, professional growth, and accountability systems. Our committee's assessment of the state models and other examples of mentoring and leadership, indicated that we need a research-based, established model that includes on- going training, modeling, instructional practice, and accountability. Results of our surveys with staff and parents show that we need to improve our entire system and process so that we retain and develop our new teachers, institute a system and process of teacher leadership to equip master teachers to lead faculty through the change process, and help all

teachers with a continuous improvement and learning process that will positively affect student achievement

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## **Narrative**

Using Part 2 application narrative from Year 1?

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.

High quality and effective classroom instruction is the foundation of our success with students. Achieving this goal is a challenge, and we have struggled to ensure that every student has an effective teacher every year they are in school. Our vision is to build a more effective structure to support great instruction, and teacher leaders are a key part of this. We envision the faculty working as a team to analyze student needs, to understand each teachers' practice and to design professional development that addresses both teacher and student needs. Our goal is for every teacher, even the most accomplished, to be supported in continuing to grow and improve. By creating a supportive and challenging learning environment for teachers, with opportunities for individual growth as well as to take on new roles and responsibilities over time, we will be better able to attract and retain promising new teachers.

Our board has recently identified and re-affirmed the district goals: They outlined two strong goal areas focused on student achievement. Goal 1 focuses on maximizing the performance of each student in all academic areas. 100% of our FAY students will be proficient in reading and math. Each FAY student will demonstrate one year of growth in reading and math. The board's second goal emphasizes a systematic instruction process for teaching and curriculum that aligns to the Iowa Core and includes research-based instructional methodology and teacher mentoring and evaluation framed around the Teacher Leadership model.

Reading: Only 72.9% of our 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient in Reading as compared to other schools in our AEA that scored in the 73-82% range proficient. 75.93% of our 8<sup>th</sup> grades students were proficient (SS) in Reading as compared to other schools in our AEA that scored higher than 76% such as several other schools in our area.

Math: In the past 3 years, there was an overall decrease of 13% in math proficiency. Most recently, our Iowa Assessment results point to our most challenging cohort groups: 69.77% of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient in math compared to other schools in our AEA whose students were 83% proficient. Similarly, 79% of our 7<sup>th</sup> and 74% of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient in math compared to 87% of the students in a nearby school district.

Science: Only 64.86% of our 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient in Science. Compared to all other schools in our AEA, we scored the lowest. Similarly, only 69.77% of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient in science. Our goal is to have every student demonstrate one year of growth in science. All students will score in the proficient range on the Iowa Assessments. We are challenged in recruiting and retaining effective educators, especially for high need grade levels and subjects such as science, math, special education, and elective content areas. We continue to struggle with recruiting and retention, especially when one of our teachers retire and we are in competition with schools.

Our goals for this plan are directly tied to our needs. **New teachers** – our newest teachers need mentoring and support to become more effective, more quickly. This plan will provide significant additional support for new teachers in the form of individual coaching in their classrooms, as well as participation in group professional development led by teacher leaders on a weekly basis. The opportunities for professional collaboration with colleagues will help to attract promising new teachers and to keep them in our district over time. **Existing teachers** will have opportunities to improve their own skills and better address areas of student need. For example, we have identified math as an area of need. Using teacher leaders, we will offer math teachers weekly professional development with colleagues, focused on specific student strategies targeting areas of need. The way we propose to deliver professional development led by school level teacher leaders will be more coherent across the faculty, and will enable teachers to reinforce key strategies across content areas. Specifically, we will increase Reading, Math and Science scores: Reading, math, and science scores will show 1 year of growth for all students. 100% of our students will score in the proficient range using the Iowa Assessment Standard Score range. Our plan meets the following goals:

- Attract able and promising new teachers by offering competitive starting salaries and offering short and long-term professional development and leadership opportunities. Retain effective teachers by providing enhanced career opportunities.
- Promote collaboration by developing and supporting opportunities for teachers to learn from each other.
- Reward professional growth and effective teaching with pathways for career opportunities with increased leadership responsibilities.
- Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction.

Master or Lead Teachers: Master or Lead teachers must have expert curricular knowledge, outstanding instructional skills and the ability to work effectively with other adults. Master teachers will be fully released from the classroom and spend their time serving, supporting and assisting teachers within the building to improve content knowledge and pedagogy. Master teachers will provide career teachers with a system of professional development that is job-embedded, collaborative and student centered.

Mentor Teachers: Mentor teachers must have expert curricular knowledge, outstanding instructional skills and the ability to

work effectively with other adults. They will be partially released or schedule common time and will spend time supporting teachers within their cluster group. Mentor teachers will support Master teachers and play a leadership role in their cluster groups.

Weekly Team Planning will involve the principal, master teacher, mentor teachers and focus on monitoring student progress and achievement goals, increased teacher proficiency, teacher skills, use of data to improve instruction, and individual growth plans.

Using Part 3 application narrative from Year 1?

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)**

Our TL plan will connect to, support, and strengthen the district's key school improvement structures and processes, and initiatives in several ways.

- Master teachers at both the elementary and secondary level will be **available to all staff**. Such support will help ensure the use of quality, proven instructional strategies.
- Mentor teachers at all instructional levels will provide teachers a link between the Master teacher and Administrative team.
- Master and mentor teachers will coach and work with all teachers using the NIET Teaching Standards or "rubrics" as the foundation of our focus on continual improvement. The rubric closely aligns to the five characteristics of effective instruction and Iowa Core.

**The district is committed to developing an effective, job-embedded professional development system which will strengthen our efforts to improve student learning. Our initial steps in this process:**

- Hiring a ½ time Literacy Coach/Assessment Coordinator at the elementary level. We discovered that a ½ time position does not allow for the amount of collaboration/coaching we need. The *TL plan would allow us to increase that half time position to full time Master Teacher position.*
- Implementation of a team meeting structure to discuss and analyze regular data collection in an effort to monitor ongoing student progress.
- The addition of classes in Earth Science, Microbiology, and Technical Science with a focus on engineering.
- 1.5 years of PLC implementation includes training our district team with Solution Tree, Grant Wood AEA, and Great Prairie AEA. The PLC process has engaged our entire teaching staff in 2 full days of training with Solutions Tree. The TAP model will allow us to implement the PLC structures and protocols more efficiently and effectively.

Using Part 4 application narrative from Year 1?

No

**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)**

As noted before, in our current system, little time is dedicated to instructional practices, in-class observations and reflective conversations, or student data with our mentoring program. We have identified gaps with our current program as lacking in these areas.

New teachers need higher levels of support to become more effective, more quickly. Our plan provides this support from day one in the form of weekly professional support, and individualized coaching in classrooms. In addition, the support from expert teachers in the new teacher's classroom will mean that students have the benefit of a more expert teacher on a regular basis, even if they are not the teacher of record.

Our plan address three deficiencies in induction programs noted in research: 1) a lack of ongoing training, 2) limited or no release time to observe high quality teaching in other classrooms or to engage in instructionally focused collaboration, and 3) a lack of identified experts within the district to provide intensive support to new teachers. The TAP model will address these gaps for the purposes of improving the entry of new teachers into the profession.

The TAP model will improve the retention rate of teachers. The average retention rate for our district teachers after three years is approximately 75%. The TAP model reports retention rates in the upper 80% range in states where the reforms described above have been implemented. The intent of this plan is to improve the retention rate by providing teacher support, high quality professional development and career pathways that provide opportunities for advancement and additional compensation. With this proposal, new teachers will receive substantial and intensive training. This training provides new teachers with a deeper understanding of their practice and content knowledge, and a systems approach to analyzing and reflecting on their practice. In addition, new teachers will gain an understanding of the power of professional collaboration and the importance of knowing their students. These standards define expectations for quality classroom instruction accompanied with a rubric and support from Mentor and Master teachers and direct help for new teachers to meet these expectations. Each teacher will also receive weekly follow-up support from Mentor or Master teachers to help implement new learning. New teachers also have the opportunity to receive individual support that is specific to instructional needs and student learning data.

**Release Time:** Master and Mentor Teachers will provide release time to first and second year teachers so they may observe teaching in other classrooms and engage in instructionally focused collaboration.

Master Teacher release time is available for demonstration or model lessons, peer review, observation of teachers, team teaching and planning professional development, and to help create the academic achievement plan for the school.

Mentor Teachers serve as a liaison between the Master and Career Teachers to ensure all teachers are receiving the support necessary to improve their instruction and increase student achievement.

Mentor Teacher release time is available for coaching and modeling for their mentees, observations and peer review.

Funding from the district's TAP model will ensure all Master teachers, Mentor teachers, and principals attend an extensive core training during the summer before initial implementation. This initial core training includes an overview of leadership team protocols, effective cluster group trainings and research-based field-testing procedures.

**Identified Experts within the District:** The TAP model and district's plan emphasizes experts in the district by identifying them as Master and Mentor teachers. In order to retain new teachers, they must gain confidence in their practice, choose to continue teaching as a career and view their profession as one that offers opportunities for advancement. To support this goal, it is critical for these new teachers to have access to an array of highly qualified and experienced teachers to support them in the development of teaching techniques and pedagogy.

New teachers will be part of the data team and PLC process with Teacher Leaders and will study, practice and reflect upon professional responsibilities, lesson plan development and instruction. This TL plan also includes scheduled release time for initial teachers to observe, collaborate and reflect on effective instructional practices. The TLC system creates a powerful, self-sustaining approach to building leadership and expertise within the District- a "train the trainer model".

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## Narrative

Using Part 5 application narrative from Year 1?

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 TAP model / our TL plan, incorporates strategies that research studies have found to be potentially effective—collaborative learning teams and instructional coaching (Biancarosa et. al, 2010; Sanders et. al, 2009). But TAP also takes the next critical step by helping schools create an infrastructure that supports high-quality PD, effective PLC teams, and ensures that the activities ultimately deliver positive results, both for teachers and for their students. The TAP system combines collaborative teams and classroom coaching to maximize the potential impact of both strategies.

Teachers will receive one-on-one coaching from master teachers and mentor teachers. These same teacher-leaders will also lead collaborative teams of teachers called “cluster groups,” which meet weekly to learn and develop new classroom strategies and to analyze the impact of those strategies on student learning. After every cluster meeting, master and mentor teachers will provide targeted follow-up coaching to help teachers master and effectively implement the strategies they worked on during the meeting, carefully calibrated to meet each teacher’s individual needs. The districts’ master and mentor teachers will also serve on a school-wide TAP Leadership Team, led by the principal, which will set clear goals for cluster groups and monitors their progress to ensure success

As previously stated, the TAP system combines collaborative teams and classroom coaching to maximize the potential impact of both strategies in improving the skills of teachers in the classroom. In traditional models of professional development educators are likely to attend a session provided away from their school site with content delivered by external presenters. In this traditional model there is rarely follow-up provided with teachers in order to ensure that they have adequately applied the new information to their classroom instruction, or are being supported in their new professional learning. In contrast, the experts leading the professional development in TAP schools are working in the same facility and with the same students as the teachers that they are supporting. Participating schools and districts included in this project are committed to implementing this high-impact model of professional development

Unlike the fragmented and disconnected approach to professional development still common in most schools, the TAP system provides teachers with a highly structured and focused form of professional development that is ongoing, job-embedded, collaborative, driven by analysis of a teachers’ specific student achievement data, and led by expert instructors. In TAP, master teachers, mentor teachers and the principal have explicit responsibility for planning and leading a range of inter-related professional development activities. While the professional development structure is common across TAP schools, the content is entirely driven by careful analysis of student and teacher needs in any given school. Typical professional development activities include:

*Cluster Groups.* TAP restructures the school schedule to provide time during the regular school day for groups of teachers to collaborate on analyzing student data and learning new instructional strategies to improve student learning. Strategies are selected by master teachers based on detailed analyses of student achievement data and are only introduced to teachers in the cluster group after the masters teachers have successfully field tested or vetted and the strategies in actual classrooms so they can demonstrate student learning gains. After master teachers introduce a new strategy, teachers use the strategy in their own classrooms, then return to cluster meetings with pre- and post-test data from formative assessments so that the group can discuss how well the strategy worked and refine it further if necessary.

*Individualized Coaching.* The TAP system expects master and mentor teachers to follow up after cluster meetings to provide every teacher with one-on-one coaching. They are provided training, authority, time, and additional compensation for these roles, and their extensive, individual work with classroom teachers is described in detail in their supplemental contracts. Master and mentor teachers carefully calibrate the content and form of coaching to meet teachers’ individual needs based specifically on the students in the teachers’ classroom. For example, they might ask:

- How well did the teacher understand the strategy overall, and did he or she struggle with a particular aspect of it?
- What kind of coaching technique would work best for this teacher in this circumstance—observation and feedback, a demonstration lesson, co-teaching?
- Will one of the “critical attributes” - the essential elements making the strategy successful - be difficult for this teacher, given what I know from the teacher’s formal evaluations or what I have observed informally in the teacher’s classroom?

Master and mentor teachers employ a wide range of coaching techniques that can be adapted to suit teachers’ individual needs. Some teachers might benefit most from “lighter” coaching in which the master or mentor teacher observes the teacher applying the new strategy during a lesson and then follows up with reflective questions and feedback. Other teachers might benefit most from a demonstration lesson during which they get to observe the master teacher modeling the strategy again, this time with an actual classroom of students. Still other teachers might need more intensive “elbow-to-elbow” coaching wherein they co-teach a lesson to a classroom of students—right alongside the master or mentor teacher. Typically master teachers are

in classrooms providing support and feedback, researching strategies, preparing for cluster group meetings and engaging in their other teacher leader responsibilities 100% of the time. Master teachers typically do not have full-time classroom responsibilities though in some sites master teachers may teach one or two preps at the secondary level.

Mentor teachers have full-time classroom responsibilities in addition to their teacher leader roles and responsibilities. Master and mentor teachers regularly visit teachers' classrooms to provide highly intensive and personalized coaching that can take a wide variety of forms, from teaching demonstration lessons to modeling specific instructional strategies or skills to team teaching. For example, master or mentor teachers often visit classrooms to coach teachers on a new instructional strategy after introducing it during a cluster group meeting. Coaching can take place outside the classroom, too: Mentor or master teachers can meet with teachers to brainstorm, troubleshoot, collaborate on lesson planning, review student work, provide feedback on teachers' plans and ideas, or to review and discuss how a lesson went.

Using Part 6 application narrative from Year 1? 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.

Master and mentor teachers will be selected through a performance-based selection process that includes intensive interviews and may include conducting model lessons. There are several options for conducting interviews to ensure the best candidate is selected.

Candidates will be informed of the selected format prior to the interview. Some performance based tasks which may or may not be used in the interview process are: 1) Review of Student Data 2) Portfolio Review 3) Teach a Lesson 4) Performance Reflection.

The district will form a hiring committee consisting of relevant school and district personnel in order to assist in the hiring process for both master and mentor teachers.

Both master and mentor teachers are expected to have a record of increasing student achievement; excellent communication skills; an understanding of how to facilitate growth in adults; and instructional expertise demonstrated through model teaching, team teaching video presentations and student achievement gains. Additionally, master teachers are required to have a master's degree in relevant academic discipline; at least five years of successful teaching as measured by performance evaluations (two years for mentor teachers); and demonstrated expertise in content, curriculum development, student learning and data analysis.

Teachers who demonstrate these required skills are likely to be able to apply their skill set to the challenges of the participating schools and districts, and are likely to be effective. This hiring process for master and mentor teachers has been implemented in TAP schools with great success, which has prompted the Van Buren Community School District to adopt the same model.

#### **Key Steps to Selection and Hiring:**

- 1. Establish an Interview Selection Committee.** The committee should consist of an equal representation of school leadership and teaching staff. At least one member on the committee will have an understanding of the significance of the role and responsibility of the position to the Leadership Team and/or experience in the position for which you are hiring.
- 2. Review applications.** All applications will be reviewed to verify qualifications and identify those candidates to be interviewed. It is important to note that a decision to re-advertise the position will be considered due to the lack of qualified candidates.
- 3. Determine the format of interviews.** This format will be determined by the selection committee.
- 4. Develop interview questions and scoring rubric.** Asking questions specifically related to the critical role and responsibilities of the master/mentor teacher position will provide a better understanding of a candidate's strengths and weaknesses.
- 5. Establish an interview schedule.** Once a determination has been made regarding the candidates to be interviewed and the format of the interview, a schedule can be created. Time for the committee to debrief after interviews will be included.
- 6. Conduct interviews.** If awarded, we plan to initiate the interview process in late spring to ensure candidate(s) have an opportunity to participate in summer training(s) and to allow time for re-advertisement, if needed.
- 7. Identify and select candidate(s).** The Selection Committee will evaluate all interviewed candidates based upon the scoring rubric and rank in order of hiring preference.
- 8. Notify candidate(s) and announce selections.** Contact, via email, mail or phone, selected candidate(s) and offer him/her the job, along with the contract addendum outlining the responsibilities, job descriptions and compensation for the role.

The following are sample interview questions to assist in determining a candidate's effectiveness and personal growth:

#### **Designing and Planning Instruction:**

- How do you decide what is important to teach?
- Explain how you align your teaching goals with school goals and content standards.
- How does your teaching and the content you teach reflect the knowledge and perspective of your students?
- How do you extend your knowledge of instructional resources and materials?
- Talk about a number of students with whom your instructional approach is different.

#### **The Learning Environment:**

- What happens in your classroom when students disagree with you or have a difference of opinion?
- How do you encourage your students to expand their thinking and take risks?
- How do you communicate and apply standards for student behavior throughout the year?
- Tell us about the ways student input and choices are incorporated into the dynamics of the class.
- Describe your expectations for student performance.

#### **Instruction:**

- How do you engage students in discussions? Give an example of an activity that was successful in maximizing student

involvement.

- How do you vary your instruction to accommodate different students' learning styles?
- Do students in your class assess each other's work?
- How does your teaching afford students opportunities to develop their own individual interests?
- How do you integrate thinking and problem-solving into your teaching?
- Discuss some ways that you provide feedback to students throughout their learning.
- How do you share the expectations you have for students?

### **Responsibilities**

- In what ways have you collaborated with your colleagues to improve your teaching?
- What staff/team development have you led?
- Have you ever team taught? If so, describe the ways in which your team planned.
- What have you done this year to improve your school's quality?
- In what areas have you reflected on your teaching? How has this helped you improve?
- How have you reached out and communicated with parents?
- What suggestions have you given parents to help them educate their children at home?

After Identifying the questions to be asked during the interview, a scoring rubric/rating form will be developed. This will allow the hiring committee to assess each candidate by the same criteria.

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## **Narrative**

Using Part 7 application narrative from Year 1?

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 past, professional development has been offered to teachers, but we have not had a systematic way of knowing if teachers applied it in their classrooms, or what the outcomes were for students. Our TL plan will enable our district to build expertise within the district and within schools, so that we can create and deliver targeted professional development designed to meet our student and teacher needs. Perhaps most important, our system will enable us to know that high quality PD was delivered, that every teacher received it, that every teacher was able to apply it in their classroom, and what the results were in terms of student learning.

We will train our teacher leaders to analyze student needs using data, identify potentially effective strategies to address these needs, try out or “field test” these strategies with students in their schools, adjust the strategies as necessary to be most effective, assess the results of the strategy, and train their colleagues to integrate the strategy into their own lessons during weekly professional development. We will also train teacher leaders to follow up with individual teachers in their classrooms, providing expert support in the form of coaching, modeling and team teaching. Their training will enable them to provide support to teachers that addresses their student needs, and their own areas for growth as an instructor at the same time. In this way, professional development will be relevant, timely, individualized and will help teachers to address specific needs of their students.

Since improvement in instruction across the faculty is the driving force behind our plan, teacher leaders must receive appropriate training to be able to take on their roles and responsibilities. Through this training, they will be able to develop and provide professional development to teachers in their buildings and across the District at varying levels. This plan provides training for Teacher Leaders and focuses on Teaching Standards to ensure they are effective in their roles and have a clear understanding of how to help teachers to improve their practice across a range of instructional indicators. Every Master and Mentor teacher will receive extensive training on the instructional rubrics prior to implementation of the district’s TL system. Ongoing job-embedded professional development designed to support teachers is an essential element of our system. Master and Mentor teachers, who have been selected to take on additional responsibilities based on evidence of improving student achievement and successful work with adult learners, will deliver professional development. Teacher leaders will lead career teachers in “cluster groups,” small professional development sessions focused on instructional improvement and increased student achievement on a weekly basis.

Professional development extends into each classroom as Master and Mentor teachers model lessons, observe instruction, and support teachers to improve practice. In this way the professional development not only focuses on instructional strategies, but is also tied to observation results, teacher reflection and student assessment data thus leading to increased accountability. Master and Mentor teachers will structure professional development around: 1) the needs of students as identified through classroom assessments; and 2) the needs of teachers as identified through classroom observations. The building principal and teacher leaders analyze data regularly during weekly meetings to ensure that the professional development remains focused on improving student outcomes through improved instruction.

All professional development is based on student learning needs. The principal, Master teacher and Mentor teachers analyze student and teacher observation data to identify areas for improvement. The team also monitors the specific student-based strategies selected and field tested by Master teachers and how they are delivered to teachers in cluster group. Master teachers use existing research and their own contacts to select student-learning strategies to meet the needs of the building and develop lesson plans to address the needs during weekly cluster trainings. These specific strategies help teachers focus on how students learn and the methods they can use to enhance instruction.

Master and Mentor teachers lead cluster trainings. Time is dedicated to analyzing student work and identifying areas of need. Next a strategy is introduced that has been field tested and demonstrated to be effective with students in the building. The teacher leader models the delivery of the strategy. Development time is allotted for teachers to plan how they will incorporate the strategy into an upcoming lesson. The teacher leader then determines the schedule for following up with each teacher to ensure they are able to effectively deliver the strategy in their classroom. Additionally, teachers are required to administer pre- and post-assessments to their students, so they can measure progress towards mastering the targeted skill. These assessments are focused on a specific student learning need and are aligned to the Iowa Core.

Based on those results, teacher leaders work with teachers to identify modifications or extensions they may need to provide to their students.

Professional development does not end with the cluster meeting. *All* teachers are provided *individual support* and resources to improve their skills and raise student achievement. This support is based on the needs of the teacher as identified through observation data. The value of this support is magnified by the fact that teachers receive guidance from the *same* teacher

leader throughout the year. This ensures that the teacher leader, as the provider of professional development and observations, has had an active role in tracking the progress and needs of a specific teacher.

Using Part 8 application narrative from Year 1?

No

**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.**

Student achievement will remain the first priority of our proposed TLC system. Current results from MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), Iowa Assessments and district created assessments will be used to develop a baseline for student achievement levels within the district. Scores from the 2015-16 school year will be compared to the baseline scores as a record of growth and increased student achievement. In terms of short term measures, teacher leaders will work with teachers to develop, use and analyze formative assessments of student learning through the cluster group process.

Teachers will be held accountable for meeting the standards for effective teaching in the NIET rubric. The rubric includes 19 indicators of effective instruction, operationalized against a five-point scale rubric. Each teacher, including Master and Mentor teachers, will be observed during announced and unannounced observations by teacher leaders. Prior to announced observations, a teacher leader will meet with teachers for a pre-conference to discuss the upcoming observation. All observations are followed with a post-conference session between the observed teacher and the teacher leader to discuss reinforcements and refinements intended to help the teacher strengthen instructional practice. This is a growth model aimed at moving teachers along a continuum, and expecting all teachers, regardless of current skills, to grow professionally. This will provide both short term and long term measurement of teacher learning and growth.

This data will allow professional development efforts to be adjusted to ultimately reach the long-term/year-end goals of increased teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Student learning will be assessed throughout the year to monitor growth using classroom data and district wide assessments. Data will be reviewed at classroom, grade, building and district levels, allowing an additional measure of plan effectiveness. Teacher leaders will use this data to monitor results and adjust the focus of professional development as necessary.

Using the NIET tools for data collection, teacher leaders, building principals, and district administration can determine the impact of instruction for individual classrooms, cluster groups, attendance centers and district-wide. Progress is tracked in all areas of the teaching rubric to identify areas of reinforcement and refinement. This data will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of PD and PLC's and follow-up assistance offered in weekly cluster group trainings. Observation data stored in the database will tell us where we are strong, as well as, areas in need of refinement. Goals will be established based on this data and will likely vary. Each school achievement plan will address how teachers and the teacher leaders will increase student achievement on formative and summative assessments. The plan will focus on achieving annual student goals through the application of research-based, field-tested instructional student strategies and measuring student progress in achieving those goals.

The school plan is an evolving plan that will provide the focus and direction for professional development. **Therefore, as student needs change, the plan will change.** The *District Leadership Team* assists the building principal and teacher leaders in meeting the expectations of best practices in leadership, while providing a general timeline to develop, monitor and evaluate school plans and goals each year.

Using Part 9 application narrative from Year 1?

Yes

**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)**

**Sustainability is an essential goal of this opportunity.** The Van Buren District is committed to providing fiscal resources, administrative support, program space, supervision, and professional development opportunities to sustain the Teacher Leadership and Compensation work. The original *steering committee* who researched possible program design will continue to be an integral part of the annual program review.

**Past History/Experience:** Van Buren Schools has been a successful grant recipient for a number of Department of Education opportunities including Team Based Variable Pay, Supplemental Strategies, Voluntary 4-year Old Pre-School, 21st Century Learning Community, Safe Schools/Healthy Students and others. The district has successfully completed all projects within time and budget guidelines cooperating actively with the Department of Education in sharing results.

**Internal Capacity:** The Van Buren Teacher Leadership & Compensation plan has the **internal capacity** and intent to implement and sustain this leadership initiative. Several staff members have indicated an interest in leadership roles. Some are more comfortable modeling in their own classroom, while others seek opportunities to co-teach, observe, and provide feedback for their colleagues by visiting other classrooms. No matter the preference, it is clear that Van Buren staff members are ready to step up and embrace the roles that will be available to them. Those who choose a more traditional classroom teaching role will also be committed to continuous learning of proven strategies and implementing that learning with fidelity. Staff commitment started with many volunteering to be part of the steering committee that researched the best program model for our district. Their enthusiasm has driven staff interest and they will continue to be an integral component of the sustainability and annual improvement of this original program design.

**Partners:** The Van Buren District has and will continue to seek partnerships, which represent a wide variety of relevant and committed key stakeholders to build upon the existing knowledge base, connect existing program strategies, and provide a unified, integrated system of service. **Master teachers, lead teachers, and mentors** will take advantage of learning opportunities provided through their regional AEA as well as other State and National trainings. Teaching staff will take advantage of the on-site, job-embedded learning opportunities provided by their leadership team. The VB TL opportunity has collaborative partners actively involved in the planning and implementation of the proposed program. Staff and Administration have been encouraged to visit other schools currently implementing Teacher Leadership with a similar approach. Such visits support *building a network of professional contacts* that will engage staff thinking and provide another avenue of support down the road. The district has surveyed both administration and teaching staff to ensure an adequate level of support for this initiative prior to seeking funding. This will help provide ownership and accountability for meeting program goals. All teachers are now trained in PLC's. The TL plan will enhance and strengthen the work we do in our district with *job-embedded learning*. Master and mentor teachers, as well as administrators, will need this process to ensure the continued success of our plan. The steering committee has kept the Board consistently updated in the research and development of the TL plan. Therefore, the Board is also supportive of this program design.

**Fiscal sustainability:** The Van Buren Board of directors is committed to raising the base salary to meet the \$33,500 program requirement. The district further understands the importance of a **continuous improvement model of professional development** and will commit district funds to ensure ALL staff members receive ample opportunities to broaden their understanding of quality learning techniques and strategies. The district strives to build capacity within, but will continue to find outside sources to encourage innovation that will support new approaches to solving lingering concerns.

**Data-enriched decisions:** As mentioned in the evaluation portion of this proposal, the district will make strong commitments to reviewing all pertinent data regarding implementation of the program. Key staff and stakeholders will take part in all facets of the program implementation and review process. Every effort will be made to ensure the project goals and principles are maintained.

The evaluation process will guide the district in making improvements to the original plan by taking into account student achievement data and staff feedback. The district will continue to look forward and plan for meeting staff and student needs.

Considerations will include what is working, what needs expansion, what budgetary issues have surfaced, and what findings have we discovered from our evaluation data.

Sustainability will be a continuous cycle of reviewing, refining, and renewing the original concept of Teacher Leadership for the Van Buren District.

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## Grant Allocation

Enter the district enrollment as reported on Line 7 of the 2013 Certified Enrollment Report. Actual funding will be based on the 2014 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.

<b>Certified Enrollment Number</b>	631.8
<i>The district enrollment-based allocation is equal to the certified enrollment number x \$308.82.</i>	
<b>District Enrollment-Based Allocation</b>	\$195,112.48
<b>Total Allocation</b>	\$195,112.48

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## Part 10 - Budget Items

<b>Use of TLC Funds</b>	<b>Amount Budgeted</b>
Amount used to raise the minimum salary to \$33,500.	\$16,000.00
Amount designated to fund the salary supplements for teachers in leadership roles.	\$45,000.00
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).	\$90,000.00
Amount used to provide professional development related to the leadership pathways.	\$44,112.48
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>\$195,112.48</b>

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## Other Budgeted Uses - Description

<b>Item description</b>	<b>Amount budgeted</b>
	<b>\$0.00</b>

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## Total Allocation Budgeted

<b>Total Projected Amount to be Expended</b>	<b>\$195,112.48</b>
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*If the amount shown below is (negative), the sum total of the dollar amounts budgeted exceeds the enrollment-based allocation.*

<b>Remaining Allocation to be Budgeted</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
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## Budget Alignment

Using Part 10 application narrative from Year 1?

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 funds awarded through the TLC Grant will be used to support the elements outlined in the district's TLC plan in the following ways:

Amount used to raise the minimum salary to \$33,500 - \$16,000

The TLC funds will support and sustain our efforts to establish the Teacher Achievement Program for the Van Buren Community School District. \$16,000 of the state TLC funds will bring our teacher salaries to the \$33,500 expectation. At this time we have nine (9) teachers below the required base. This directly relates to our goal of attracting able and promising new teachers by offering competitive starting salaries.

Approximate amount designated to fund the salary supplements for teachers in leadership roles - \$45,000:

In order to offer short and long term professional development and leadership opportunities and retain effective teachers by offering enhanced career opportunities, \$27,000 of the TLC funds will be used to compensate our 6 mentor teachers at \$4,500 each for their work mentoring our beginning teachers, working with our Career and Master teachers during cluster meetings, mentoring and coaching our Career teachers in the classroom, and meeting with teachers before and after school hours.

Mentor teachers will have an extended contract of 10 additional days during the summer months.

\$18,000 will be used as compensation (\$9,000 each) for Master Teachers who will be leading our entire TAP program, providing leadership in our cluster and coaching meetings, collaborating with administrators, providing guided instruction and data meetings, and an extension of their contract by 20 additional days during the summer months.

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) - \$90,000:

\$90,000 of our TLC funds will be used to hire two (2) Master teachers. One Master Teacher will be hired for our elementary level (K - 6th) and the other for our secondary level (7th - 12th). The Master teacher will be a full-released teacher.

We estimate replacement of 2 Master teachers from our teaching staff, or by hiring a Master teacher from outside of our institution at \$45,000 each for a total of \$90,000.

Both master and mentor teachers are expected to have a record of increasing student achievement; excellent communication skills; an understanding of how to facilitate growth in adults; and instructional expertise demonstrated through model teaching, team teaching video presentations and student achievement gains. Additionally, master teachers are required to have a master's degree in relevant academic discipline; at least five years of successful teaching as measured by performance evaluations (two years for mentor teachers); and demonstrated expertise in content, curriculum development, student learning and data analysis. Teachers who demonstrate these required skills are likely to be able to apply their skill set to the challenges of the participating schools and districts, and are likely to be effective. These skill sets directly relate to our goal to improve student achievement through systematic, comprehensive instructional coaching around proven instructional strategies and frequent collegial collaboration. In addition, it will allow the district to reward professional growth and effective teaching by providing pathways for career opportunities that come with increased leadership responsibilities and involve increased compensation

Amount used to provide professional development related to the leadership pathways - \$44,112.48:

We estimate that approximately \$50,000 will be required for professional development and training of the TAP model for all of our teachers and administration. \$44,112.48 of this amount will be provided through the use of TLC revenue; the district will provide the approximate remaining \$5,887.52 using PD funds. We have been in contact with the Institute for Excellence in Teaching who help provide the training for the TAP model as well as informal discussions with our AEA. We are in hopes that a hybrid model for training using the TAP model will be provided through our AEA's in the state of Iowa. Our district is committed to earmark additional PD funds as necessary so that we are assured of receiving the training for the TAP model. We are committed to using district resources to visit and work with other current TAP schools as well as attend the National TAP Conference in California so that we are aptly positioned to begin our journey of teacher leadership. Master and mentor teachers will be heavily involved in planning and providing professional development for staff, based on current student and staff needs, as evidenced by routine data collection. These steps are directly related to our commitment to establish a professional learning community culture through collaboration and job-embedded professional development in accordance with the Iowa Professional Development Model.

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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