

Sheridan School District

Project Abstract

Sheridan School District's Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) project, will implement a performance-based compensation system, combined with sustained and job-embedded professional development, to improve student achievement by increasing the effectiveness of teachers and principals.

The first criteria of the TIF grant is a:

Coherent and Comprehensive Human Capital Management System (HCMS) which they define as: a system by which an LEA makes and implements human capital decisions, such as decisions on recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, compensation, professional development, tenure and promotion.

Please describe your district HCMS as it currently exists and any proposed modifications during the life of the grant.

Sheridan School District's Human Capital Management System (HCMS) is comprised of teacher evaluation and compensation system that reflects a very traditional approach. SSD negotiates with our local teacher union to establish a salary schedule that sets the base rate for teacher pay with increments for "steps" and "lanes" that respond to years of experience and continuing education. The evaluation system is based on the traditional goal setting, formal and informal observations with a summative evaluation to formalize the process. The current evaluation system has been used in the dismissal of a teacher, through the Plan of Assistance process and the teacher's failure to improve in the areas of deficiency, with the teacher then non-renewed. The placement of teachers is based on years experience and education only.

The Recruitment, retention and promotion of valuable staff is very important to the district. However, our current compensation lacks the incentives to promote our district. This is a roadblock for a small district. We currently do not provide incentives or a different salary schedule for difficult to fill positions, this is also true for the retention of teachers in key positions. SSD has lost or were unable to hire for certain positions due to our current system. The district does not promote staff members. Staff must apply and go through the hiring process to be considered for a different position.

Professional Development is focused on the District improvement goals in the areas of; building positive student relationships, math best practices, reading best practices, writing best practices, Common Core, Common Formative Assessments and technology. We have had reading and math coaches in the past, but they have been cut do to lack of funds.

Goal #1:

Sheridan School District (SSD), Sheridan Teacher Association (STA) and Mid-Valley Bargaining Council (MVBC) would review and update SSD evaluation system to reflect requirements in SB 290, with the goal of developing a differentiated compensation system with four performance domains by which to evaluate educator effectiveness:

- Student achievement on formative and statewide assessments
- Value-added methods of measuring academic growth and achievement over time
- Leadership and additional duties
- Observation-based assessment

The weighting of the above criteria and the development of an approved formative assessment list will be developed during the first year of the grant. With the full development of a data system that provides a meaningful and proficiency-based evaluation system for our teachers and administrators.

Our design team will research each component and work through a collaborative process toward the final recommendation for implementation of a PBCS (performance-based compensation system) for teachers and administrators. The grant will provide the financial support to invest heavily in intense and sustained professional development to create a cohort of highly effective teachers and principals. Further, the project will maximize the investment of every teacher and principal in every child's success, promote individual and shared accountability for a student achievement, encourage highly effective teachers to share with, model, and coach less effective teachers, and foster a school culture and climate of collaboration and collegiality.

Sheridan School District believes that all students can learn and have the right to develop to their full potential. Teachers are the major influence student learning. Through this process we hope to improve the consistency of curriculum delivery, assessments and data analysis. SSD implemented PLC groups (Professional Learning Communities) three years ago and started providing early release time for collaboration on student data, instructional best practices and student achievement. Our teachers have shared a need for more assistance and feedback. Both the science (the sharing and use of relevant and timely student data) and the art of teaching are essential in maximizing student learning. SSD teachers are compassionate, highly qualified, skilled and motivated. It is important to retain and recruit effective teachers to provide continuity of instruction and support of continuous school improvement. SSD teachers have expressed interest in an enhanced performance evaluation system that promotes feedback for improvement of instruction and increased student learning.

Goal #2:

With the collaboration of teachers and administrators, SSD will create a career path model with a connection to the compensation and evaluation system in Goal #1. This will help improve the recruitment and the retention of effective teachers and administrators. The career path model will provide opportunities for teacher leadership to improve student academic achievement and teacher professional growth.

Compounding the problem of recruiting highly effective teachers is the number of districts in our geographic area who offer performance-based bonuses in addition to regular salary and who are far more affluent than SSD. In addition the rate in which SSD loses teachers to other districts due to salary, incentives and scheduling.

The alignment of the HCMS to the district's vision of instructional improvement

Sheridan School District teachers and administrators are life-long learners that need to be supported with relevant and sustainable professional development that supports student learning and professional growth. SSD continues to use a single-salary schedule rewarding experience and education for teachers and administrators. The current compensation system does not offer any financial incentive to encourage teachers to improve their instructional expertise and effectiveness. Teachers and administrators have expressed a need for incentives and recognition to encourage professional growth to improve student achievement. They have expressed the need for a professional evaluation system that is fair in the utilization of student performance measures with additional compensation opportunities. Teachers who assume responsibilities that include leadership roles should have the option for additional compensation opportunities that are identified with specific requirements, outcomes and incorporates professional development programs. As teachers and administrators work through the multiple compensation methods it will be important to identify data quality and data measures, program education, staff support, communication and sustainability in determining the best method for Sheridan.

SSD has utilized research based professional development to provide collaboration and team building so that best practices can be shared and mutual learning from each other can take place. The opportunity to advance through a variety of career options is important to our staff. Research shows that teacher moral is improved through the participation in an intellectual environment that includes opportunities for growth, leadership and advancement. During the first year of the grant the design team will develop a collaborative responsive career path model unique to Sheridan. The model will compensate those who add these responsibilities to their work. Examples of model components discussed include:

Master Teacher Areas:

- Professional Learning Committee Leader (PLC Leader)
- Content Area Leader
- Professional Development Leader – providing PD to staff
- Coordinator of a program area – example AVID coordinator
- Professional Development Regional Leader – provide PD outside of the district

Mentor Teacher Area

- Mentoring a first year teacher
- Mentoring in a specific content area
- TOSA
- National Board Certification

Extent to which the HCMS is likely to increase the number of effective educators

Sheridan School District in cooperation with Sheridan Educators Association conducted a sixteen-question survey asking teachers questions related to evaluation system, career paths, compensation and professional development. The majority of teachers reported that SSD has a traditional career path model, with opportunities for advancement requiring administrative licensure or specialist endorsement. They do not have a clear understanding of a career model or their opportunities for leadership. In addition they see no correlation between leadership, evaluations and compensations.

To date the district has made minor adjustments to the performance evaluation system and professional development, but has not completed any work on a compensation model.

Sheridan school district does not use performance-based assessments in our evaluation process. With the introduction of PLC groups, teachers analyze student data to improve instruction and this new process may have caused confusion. Teachers and administrators have introduced a professional growth group this winter and of the

Survey Questions:	Reponses:
1. District has a traditional career path for teachers and administrators?	76.9% agreed that a traditional career path exists and 23.1% believe we are researching a career path system
2. District has researched alternative career paths for teachers and/or administrators tied performance evaluation results, strategic professional development and compensation?	76.9% believe we have begun the process of implementation
3. District has designed an alternative career path for teachers and/or administrators tied to a least one of the following: performance evaluation results, strategic professional development, and compensation?	76.9% believe we are in the beginning stages of implementing an alternative career pathway Other's didn't know what the threes areas are about
4. District is implementing an alternative career path for teachers and/or administrators tied to a least one of the following: performance evaluation results, strategic professional development, and compensation?	85% believe we have started the beginning stages of implementation. The remaining are unclear of what the district is working on.
5. District has an evaluation system in place for teachers and administrators completely detached from any performance based assessment?	70% reported that our system is detached from any performance-based assessment. 30% were not sure
6. District has researched performance based evaluation systems?	75% believe we are in the process researching new performance based evaluation system.
7. District has designed a performance based evaluation system linked to student achievement?	85% of teachers surveyed agree we are in the beginning stages.
8. District is implementing a performance based evaluation system linked to student achievement?	91.7% agree we have not implemented a performance based evaluation system linked to student achievement
9. District has a compensation program for teachers and administrators built on years of experience and education?	83.3% of teachers surveyed agreed that is our compensation system
10. District has researched alternative compensation program for local teachers and administrators?	100% believe we are in the beginning stages of research
11. District has designed a compensation program connected to career paths for teachers and/or	91.7% believe we are in the beginning stages of researching and designing a compensation

administrators tied to performance evaluation results and professional development?	program connected to career paths
12. District is implementing a compensation program connected to career paths for teachers and/or administrators tied to performance evaluation results and professional development?	91.7% know we have not implemented a compensation program connected to career paths for teachers
13. District teachers and administrators participate in professional development for licensing PDU's and personal goals?	91.7% reported that we are implementing a professional development process for licensing PDU's and personal goals
14. District has researched professional development tied to performance evaluation and professional growth?	58.3% report the district is in the implementing stages, 40% believe we have used a system on a small scale
15. District has designed a professional development program for teachers and administrators that are job embedded and tied to performance evaluation and professional growth?	83% report the district is in the beginning stages
16. District is implementing a professional development program for teachers and administrators that are job embedded and tied to performance evaluation and professional growth?	91% reported that the district is in the beginning stages

What do you perceive as the major challenge to successful participation in the pilot? The major support for successful participation?

Readiness Issue	Evaluation (1-5)
1. Do teachers believe that they can have a strong impact on student learning gains?	(5) 95.2% agree/strongly agree
2. Teachers will be open to new career enhancement and compensation ideas.	(3) 66.6% agree / strongly agree

When asked what major challenges would cause an unsuccessful participation in a pilot study, teachers reported reluctance, time consuming, how will student data be used, burned in the past, singled out, teachers only teach to test, already overloaded, change comes with reservations, administration does not deem certain teachers worth investing in and fair compensation. SSD teachers have a general reluctance to commit to another time-consuming evaluation process and a lack of information other than what they have seen in the paper or news.

The major support for SSD participation is the agreement from the Sheridan Teachers Association to participate and the teachers who have already joined the design team to start the process and write this grant to help support the process. The design team reviewed the survey data and discussed among their group that they are either part of the process or let the process be a part of them. To ensure successful participation and teacher by in the design team will create an atmosphere of open communication and promote teacher awareness and involvement in the creation of the performance-based compensation system

How would you describe the district's/districts' school improvement strategy and vision for increasing student achievement?

Sheridan School District has a long tradition of being an innovative and goal-driven school district. The District has used the strategic planning process to shape the educational programs and services provided in our schools. The process of planning and managing improvements has allowed the district to meet the academic needs of our students.

Each year, the District updates its strategic plan, including a review of the District's **mission, values, and strategic directions**. An internal and external data analysis is a key component of the plan's update. The analysis guides the development of the District's yearly improvement goals and the respective action plans. A review of the improvement goals is completed at the end of each school year.

The board and administrative team review school-wide and district wide data to determine goals or to review the results of current goals. PLC teams review student data toward the common core standards and develop student achievement goals that are a reflection of school-wide goals. The emphasis is the implementation of the "Common Core Standards" within the state timeline.

At what stage of development is it?

Sheridan School District completed their strategic planning for the 2011-2015 school years in anticipation of the changes toward the common core standards and to improve student achievement. (See Appendix A)

What are the district's/districts' major school improvement initiatives?

Sheridan School District has identified; the implementation of the common core standards, curriculum mapping, curriculum pacing and grade level assessments. We began the process last spring with the training of our administrative team as trainers in order to provide professional development to our staff. Teachers have received the introduction to the common core and the unwrapping process. In addition we have sent grade level teams to a variety of common core training opportunities. Grade level leaders report back to their PLC teams. SSD is working closely with the WESD to implement "Build Your Own Curriculum" in order to manage curriculum changes and the improvement process. In addition we have contracted the WESD to survey and consult on the effectiveness of our PLC team in order to build action plans for the next school year.

How well has the district's/districts' school improvement strategy and vision for increasing student achievement been communicated and accepted?

SSD communicates the school improvement strategy through a variety of venues and opportunities including; SSD website, newsletters, posters, staff meetings, PLC team meetings and professional development opportunities. Teacher review student data regularly and know the target for their grade level and school building and the importance of meeting the goal. Faulconer Chapman School K-8 and Sheridan High School staff have both been in school improvement status and received extensive training on data analysis and meeting achievement goals.

SSD has chosen to move ahead with the implementation of the common core standards and will experience a decrease in student performance scores during the transition period.

What is the evidence that it is part of teachers' daily life?

Teachers work together to look at the standards and plan instruction and assessments. Using data, teachers assess student achievement toward district goals in reading and math. Teachers also meet in PLC groups to analyze student achievement data, with discussion and action plans to meet student academic needs around best instructional practice.

Is it embedded in the teacher assessment process?

Yes, our teachers understand the importance of teaching and assessing to the standards. Teachers have the opportunity to work with their grade level teams, PLC teams and grade range teams to work toward the goals of student achievement in core subjects.

e. Your assessment of your district's/districts' working environment including other major school improvement efforts. What is the district currently using as a supervision and evaluation process for teachers?

SSD teacher evaluation is a very traditional approach. Teachers and administrators determine their goals for the school year in the fall. Administrators follow up with "walk through", informal and formal observations. As a small school district SSD administrators know their teachers and work with them very closely to meet the needs of the students. We implemented a "Professional Growth" model system for contracted teachers that provided for alternatives to classroom observations. However, teachers still prefer the traditional method of evaluation. Each teacher has a formal summative evaluation at the conclusion of the school year.

How are school and district teams utilizing student achievement measures to inform school improvement efforts?

The district, schools and PLC grade level teams utilize student achievement data to monitor progress toward goals and objectives, curriculum improvements, improve instructional practices, connect and implement teacher and principal professional development to student data and implementation of improvement strategies for sustainability.

How would you describe opportunities for professional development?

Professional development is determined by the district strategic plan. SSD utilizes administrators and teacher leaders, whenever possible, to be trained as trainers to provide professional development and support. In addition, we utilize consultants whenever an expertise is needed. SSD has provided professional development in the areas of; PLC, data team, common core standards, "Capturing Kids Hearts", technology, AVID,

differentiated instruction, unwrapping standards, and instructional best practices.

How much time is provided per week?

During the 2009-2010 school year the SSD board of directors approved early release Mondays. Teachers were placed into grade-level PLC teams or content area teams. Teachers meet every Monday to review student achievement data, curriculum, instructional best practices and student interventions. Early release Monday's provides one hour of time, with additional time provided during four regularly scheduled in-service days. Staff meetings do not occur on Mondays, we have worked hard to protect the time period for teacher collaboration. Each PLC team must report the School Board on their goals and the process they utilized to achieve their goals.

Are professional opportunities embedded in teachers' jobs?

SSD has utilized job-embedded professional development (JEPD) through the use of coaches, consultants and PLC team leaders. SSD has resolved with the WESD for the use of a consultant every Monday for the 2012-2013 school year, for the purpose of coaching and providing PD during early release and in-service time. Our goal is to provide teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice. She will work with teachers to assist with assessing and finding solutions for authentic and immediate problems of practice as part of a cycle of continuous improvement. Providing an ongoing process that makes a direct connection between learning and application in daily practice, thereby requiring active teacher involvement in cooperative, inquiry-based work.

Are there other working conditions that would enhance teachers' ability to perform?

Early release Monday's has pressure from other areas of school improvement, including EBIS team meeting, subject area meeting, etc. Many PLC teams report a need for additional time to be more productive. We have developed a new schedule for the 2012-2013 school year to increase the PLC release time for all grade levels.

Detract from ability to perform? Please explain or give examples.

1. Observations: informal and formal – new teachers are observed more often
2. PLC's – review student data
3. Early release Monday's provide time for professional development, workshops,
4. NO
5. More prep / more professional time
6. Lack of time / lack of schedule

f. Expectations of key stakeholders for the success of the CLASS Project. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Extremely Disagree, 5 = Extremely Agree) assess each of the following and briefly describe evidence for your ratings.

Readiness Issue	Evaluation (1-5)
1. The District(s) has a strong, positive	5

relationship with the teacher's union leadership.	
2. The District's/Districts' teachers will support our participation in the pilot.	5
3. The community (including parents) will support the pilot.	4
4. The District's/Districts' Board will support the pilot.	5

g. Commitment of district's/districts' resources to achieve a successful pilot. Identify conditions of strength and support that now exist in your district that will assist in successful planning and implementation of the CLASS Pilot Project.

SSD and the STA (Sheridan Teacher Association) have been meeting monthly in discussions on how to meet the changes within SB 290. Many of the teachers and administrators are familiar with Charlotte Danielson's work and this has provided a topic to formulate our discussions. The outgrowth of the monthly meetings was the creation of the "Professional Growth Design Team" to research evaluation process changes, career path for teacher leaders and tie a new compensation system to reward teacher leadership and teacher outcomes. The strength and support that exist in our district include: the development of our PLC groups, administrative leadership, board support, available funds, staff willingness.

IV. Components of Your Plan

During the CLASS planning phase, districts will explore each of the following opportunities. Although each district will make choices on what they wish to pilot, please indicate all of the model components that are of initial interest by checking the boxes that apply below.

Model Components	Description	Interest In Exploring
Professional Development	Time and resources for ongoing, research-based, job- embedded professional development for educators, built into the teaching day or week	
Expanded Career Opportunities and Definitions	Explicit definition and recognition of professional career achievement (e.g., Novice, Emerging Professional, Accomplished Professional, Master Teacher) or specialized roles (e.g. Mentor Teacher)	X-3
Standards-Based Performance Evaluation	Educator performance evaluation incorporating standards-based grading on professional practice, linked to student achievement	X-1
Career-Based Pay and Salary Ladders	Salary increases associated directly with career advancement (e.g.,	X-2

	Beginning Professional, Professional, Accomplished Professional, Master) and salary adders for additional responsibilities	
Alternative Salary Schedules	Alternatives to the traditional compensation paths (20 to 30 steps, nine-12 lanes) that get teachers to career high pay faster, and are weighted towards rewarding student and teacher achievement	X-4
Performance-Based Awards – School Level	Additional pay (incentives) for teachers whose students meet or exceed learning improvement goals tied to NCLB or the district's/districts' school improvement goals. Could also include administrators and classified employees	