

# Career Lattice Design Team

## Interim Report

January 18, 2007

### Introduction

MCEA and MCPS are committed to ensure that there is a high-quality teacher in every MCPS classroom. The MCPS strategic plan, *Our Call to Action, Pursuit of Excellence* Goal 4 and Board Policy GAA focus on Creating a Positive Work Environment in a Self-renewing Organization. These commitments emphasize the importance of having structures and processes in place to attract, recruit, hire, mentor, develop, evaluate, recognize, and retain high-performing teachers. MCEA and MCPS believe that excellence in teaching is critical to student learning

The Teachers' Professional Growth System (PGS) is focused on providing support and job-embedded professional development for our novice, skilled and underperforming teachers. The Career Lattice is not only a framework to recognize and support those teachers who are exemplary, but it also provides opportunities to help teachers become exemplary. This Lattice provides a structure for career planning that expands professional opportunities for teacher leaders while allowing them to continue to have direct responsibility for student learning.

As designed, the Career Lattice will benefit MCPS at the individual, school and district levels.

For the individual, benefits include development of leadership skills and increased professional satisfaction, The Career Lattice provides teachers with the structures and opportunities to make a difference in student achievement beyond their classroom, as well as an incentive to work in high need schools. Participants in the Career Lattice assume greater levels of responsibility for improving student learning both inside and outside the classroom.

At the school level, the school benefits from increased teacher leadership and increased collaborative capacity of staff; introduction of innovative and effective practices that improve student learning on a variety of measures; and to attract and retain of highly skilled teachers in high-need schools.

At the district level, benefits include greater levels of growth in student learning through the development of skillful, collaborative instructional teams. The Career Lattice will be an effective structure for building the leadership capacity not only of teachers but also of future school administrators. The district benefits by "growing its own" pool of classroom-based and instruction-focused candidates for leadership positions, including school-based leadership positions, teacher specialists and in school administration.

The partners affirm that there are developmental stages in a teaching career, which include Induction, Skillful Teaching, and Leadership in Teaching. To be successful in MCPS a teacher must reach the Skillful Teaching Stage. Some professionals will choose to become teacher

leaders and enter into the Leadership in Teaching Stage. The Career Lattice is designed to meet the professional aspirations of those teachers. These developmental stages are described below.

### ■ **Induction Stage**

Educators new to teaching are provided training and supports to strengthen their emerging skills and knowledge. State law defines the first two years as the “probationary” period, at the end of which the probationary teacher whose performance meets standard is granted tenure. Induction continues for many new educators well into their third, fourth, and fifth years of teaching, as they take courses to gain advanced professional certification and as they engage in job-embedded professional growth activities in classrooms, schools, and the district.

### ■ **Skillful Teaching Stage**

Teachers who have achieved tenure, meet the rigorous evaluation standards of the Teacher Professional Growth System, and engage in regular professional growth activities (including graduate course work to achieve or maintain their advanced professional certificate) have reached an accomplished stage in their career. They are skillful professionals who are focused on improved student achievement, lifelong learners, and excellent models for their less experienced colleagues. A majority of the MCPS teacher workforce is in this stage of accomplishment and skill. Many teachers choose this as the culminating stage of a professionally rewarding and honorable career. Some in this stage opt to participate in the rigorous application and assessment process to become a Nationally Board Certified Teacher.

### ■ **Leadership in Teaching Stage**

Some skilled teachers desire to serve through leadership in their schools and classrooms and seek even greater responsibility. At this stage, the teacher takes on new challenges to support, coach, mentor, and lead colleagues in instructional and school improvement which result in increased student learning. These efforts contribute to improved teaching and learning over the long term. Some of the current opportunities for teacher leaders include serving as department heads, team leaders, staff development teachers, new educator trainers, consulting teachers, or mentors. During this career stage, teacher leaders serve in formal and informal ways, often without compensation.

Through our commitment to professional growth-- from career entry to retirement—we have created a Professional Growth System that provides supports for these career stages. Supports currently include induction activities and mentoring for probationary teachers (Induction Stage) and job-embedded professional development for tenured teachers (Skillful Teacher Stage). The Career Lattice will provide additional supports for teachers who choose to move into the third stage of their teaching career (Leadership in Teaching) and desire to have an impact beyond their classrooms and in the service of their colleagues. In addition to providing increased professional learning opportunities for teachers, the Career Lattice is designed to recognize these skilled

teachers and provide them with a variety of opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities to promote student learning and achievement.

## **The MCPS Career Lattice**

### **Definition**

The Career Lattice is framework that includes definitions of leadership responsibilities; processes for application, identification, and evaluation of Teacher Leaders; and a compensation structure that is aligned to the leadership responsibilities. It provides recognition and career planning opportunities for exemplary teachers to retain direct responsibility for students while accepting additional responsibilities as leaders, coaches, and facilitators of school improvement. Some teachers will receive salary supplements that acknowledge an increased level of leadership and responsibilities within the school. Other teachers will be able to implement programs and projects that will increase student learning. A Career Lattice differs from a career ladder in that it identifies teacher leadership roles within the teacher bargaining unit that encourage accomplished teachers to remain in the classroom.

### **Goals for the Career Lattice**

The goals of the Career Lattice are to

- promote leadership skills among teachers both in the classroom and in the larger community of school, cluster, or district to the benefit of the instructional program
- attract and retain high-performing teachers, especially in high-need schools
- promote teacher leadership for measurable educational improvements; and
- promote and support collaborative and reflective practices that influence school culture and student achievement.

For each of the above goals, there are defined criteria for success that are observable and can be documented.

### **Structure of the MCPS Career Lattice**

*Lead Teachers* are those teachers who have been accepted into the Career Lattice. They have demonstrated instructional mastery and leadership skills and have chosen to move into the Leadership in Teaching Stage. The application process requires evidence of exemplary teaching performance and leadership skills with colleagues. The Career Lattice framework will identify within the MCEA teacher bargaining unit the teacher leadership positions and opportunities for

which *Lead Teachers* would qualify. Each of the opportunities for *Lead Teachers* is designed to benefit the program for students.

*Lead Teacher* status is a gateway to selection for a variety of teacher leadership roles within MCPS. Once a teacher is selected to enter the Career Lattice as a *Lead Teacher* (see Selection process, below), and he/she is eligible to be selected for specific roles within MCPS. At this time, the *Lead Teacher* opportunities consist of the following. Any new positions would be included as part of the negotiations or budget process.

### 1. Teacher Leadership Positions

- Resource Teacher
- Consulting Teacher
- Instructional Specialist
- Math Content Specialist
- Academy Coordinator
- Staff Development Teacher
- Staff Development Specialist
- Literacy Coach
- Algebra *Lead Teacher*

*Lead Teacher* status can also be a gateway to selection for certain opportunities in high needs schools. The Career Lattice Panel shall have responsibility for approving guidelines for Project Leadership Opportunities. Project Leadership Opportunities are to be approved and evaluated on an annual basis by the Leadership Team. In order to involve more *Lead Teachers* in school improvement efforts, Project Leadership Opportunities are available to *Lead Teachers* who have not already assumed the responsibilities of the Teacher Leadership position enumerated above.

### 2. Project Leadership

- **Project Leadership in High Poverty Schools**  
High Poverty schools are defined as those schools with the highest proportion of students in poverty (as measured by “now or ever in FARMS”). **The cut off for what constitutes a high poverty school will be determined based on the capacity of the district to support these projects.** *Lead Teachers* in a high needs school can be allocated a designated level of funding to support locally designed school improvement projects. **For each lead teacher in a high needs school, the school could receive certain amount of money for projects.** The purpose of this funding structure is to provide an incentive for high need schools to cultivate, retain and attract *Lead Teachers*. Supported school improvement projects must be aligned with the school improvement plan. **Proposals for projects are developed by the school leadership team in conjunction with the lead teacher. These project plans will be reviewed by the Career Lattice Joint Panel and the Office of School Performance. The projects will be monitored by the school’s Leadership Team.** In order to take advantage of the enhanced skills and leadership of *Lead Teachers*, such school improvement

projects should be implemented by *Lead Teachers*. However *Lead Teachers* are not required to take on such additional responsibilities.

- **Project Leadership in Schools Not Meeting “Adequate Yearly Progress”**  
For purposes of this initiative, schools not meeting AYP are defined as those schools in the second year of “School Improvement” – in other words, schools that have not met AYP for two consecutive years. For each *Lead Teacher* in such a school, the school will be allocated a designated level of funding to support locally designed school improvement projects. The purpose of this funding structure is to provide an incentive for schools not meeting AYP to cultivate, retain and attract *Lead Teachers*.

Supported school improvement projects must be aligned with the school improvement plan. **Proposals for projects are developed by the school leadership team in conjunction with the lead teacher. These project plans will be reviewed by the Career Lattice Joint Panel and the Office of School Performance. The projects will be monitored by the school’s Leadership Team.** In order to take advantage of the enhanced skills and leadership of *Lead Teachers*, such school improvement projects should be implemented by *Lead Teachers*. However *Lead Teachers* are not required to take on such additional responsibilities.

### **3. New/Additional Opportunities for Teacher Leadership**

Leadership is not position-dependent. *Lead Teacher* status is a gateway to opportunities for classroom teachers to take on new leadership responsibilities within schools. **This list of responsibilities is a dynamic list and could change due to new district initiatives and priorities. *Lead Teachers* would have preference for these opportunities.** These opportunities include:

- Professional Learning Communities Coach (TBD: define)
- School Improvement Coach (TBD: define):
- Serving on the Peer Assistance & Review Program Panel
- Serving on the Career Lattice Program Panel
- Professional Development Trainer
- Mentor Teacher
- Supervisor of Student Teachers and partnership programs teacher
- Elementary School Team Leader
- Middle School Team Leader

## **The Career Lattice Joint Panel**

The Career Lattice Joint Panel will be the vehicle by which the Lattice design is implemented and refined. This panel is comprised of equal numbers of teachers and administrators who are recommended by the Montgomery County Education Association and the Montgomery County

Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel and appointed by the superintendent. MCPS will be represented by the Associate Superintendent for the Office of Human Resources (or her designee).

The Career Lattice Joint Panel is responsible for:

- *Lead Teacher* application process and development of application forms
- *Lead Teacher* identification process
- *Lead Teacher* recertification process
- Data collection about the cadre of *Lead Teachers* (demographic, educational, etc.) as well as data needed to track results
- Career Lattice revisions and improvement recommendations
- Provide input to shared accountability in evaluating the program

The members of the panel will receive training and ongoing professional development in the analysis and assessment of professional portfolios. The Panel will adopt operating procedures, ground rules and dispute resolution mechanisms. The Teacher PGS Implementation Team will provide support and oversight.

### ***Lead Teacher Definition and Expectations***

While entry into the Career Lattice is in no way required for MCPS educators, *Lead Teacher* status offers teachers a variety of opportunities to become leaders and to use their expertise to support student learning at a local school and district level. Teachers who achieve *Lead Teacher* status and who take on additional responsibilities receive additional compensation. Teachers who achieve *Lead Teacher* status and who have no additional responsibilities receive no additional compensation.

*Lead Teachers* build the capacity of individuals and the total school community to meet the needs of all children. In doing so, *Lead Teachers* create and sustain lasting processes, programs, and/or structures that improve teaching and learning. *Lead Teachers* do this both inside and outside the classroom, and in the larger community of school, cluster, or district by:

- Working with other adults in a team, in the school, cluster or district to improve instructional practice and facilitate school improvement
- Collaborating with school staff and other stakeholder groups including students, families, and community members to close the achievement gap and raise the bar for success for all students
- Nurturing and sustaining a school, cluster, and/or district culture of high expectations and professional growth
- Demonstrating and encouraging colleagues to commit to lifelong learning

- Reflecting on their instruction and inspiring other teachers to reflect on their own instruction.
- Demonstrating a commitment to cultural competence and promoting culturally responsive learning environments
- Initiating projects or programs that benefit children at a school, cluster, or district level, placing special emphasis on closing the achievement gap
- Creating and sustaining lasting organizational improvements that result in high levels of teaching and growth in student learning
- Requesting, participating, and documenting in *Lead Teacher* peer visit and reflection activities for their own professional growth

## **Process for *Lead Teacher* Selection**

Following five years of successful teaching experience, attainment of an Advanced Professional Certificate, and completion of either the *Skillful Teacher* or the *Observation and Analysis of Teaching* course, tenured teachers become eligible to apply for *Lead Teacher* status and enter the Career Lattice.

Teachers apply to become *Lead Teachers* by submitting a portfolio application to the Career Lattice Joint Panel. Teachers who do not achieve *Lead Teacher* status may reapply in one year.

The *Lead Teacher* Portfolio Application consists of the following:

- A video demonstrating instructional expertise that is accompanied by a written reflection and self-examination of practice (consider completion of the National Professional Teaching Standards Board *Take One* program). NOTE: National Board Certified Teachers are exempt from this requirement since they have successfully completed this activity and satisfied the standards of the National Board during their certification process.
- Evidence of analysis and use of student achievement data, including a variety of formal and informal measures, to inform and modify instructional practices that resulted in improved student achievement. NOTE: National Board Certified Teachers are exempt from this requirement since they have successfully completed this activity and satisfied the standards of the National Board during their certification process.
- Evidence of collegial activities that were designed to support student achievement and build the capacity of colleagues. Examples may include:
  - Team-based school improvement initiatives,
  - Professional development of colleagues,
  - Application of professional development learning with colleagues, and

- Demonstration of successful leadership in school-based initiatives or special programs.
- A minimum of three recommendations from colleagues and one from the candidate's supervisor that provides evidence that the candidate demonstrates a collaborative leadership style.

### ***Lead Teacher Duties and Responsibilities***

The skills and knowledge as well as the additional duties and responsibilities of the *Lead Teacher* role will be matched to the needs of the individual school within the context of the school system's strategic plan. *Lead Teachers* will:

- Use their instructional, leadership and collaborative knowledge and skills to work with colleagues to meet SIP goals or district goals
- Take initiative and lead colleagues in developing strategies and practices that focus on the elimination of the achievement gap
- Build instructional, leadership, and collaborative capacity in their colleagues
- Develop work plans to address issues raised by data and lead their implementation

### ***Lead Teacher Evaluation and Recertification Process***

There are two components in the evaluation and recertification of *Lead Teachers*.

- Performance relative to their *Lead Teacher* responsibilities: In their evaluation year, *Lead Teachers* will complete a reflective recertification portfolio that will be submitted to the Career Lattice Joint Panel. The Career Lattice Joint Panel will assess the portfolios, decide if the *Lead Teacher* has met his/her responsibilities and determine renewal of *Lead Teacher* status. The Panel will provide this information to the immediate supervisor. Primary evidence for review will be completion of the portfolios that document successful completion of the additional duties and responsibilities of the *Lead Teacher* role. The portfolio should include reflection on their performances from peers. Certification will expire at the end of the evaluation year unless the *Lead Teacher* submits a successful portfolio.
- Performance relative to their teaching positions: For this role, *Lead Teachers* will be evaluated by their immediate supervisors using the Professional Growth System according to the standards and criteria.

Following a successful first year, *Lead Teachers* will be recertified on the schedule of their Professional Growth Cycle. The Career Lattice Joint Panel must approve the renewal of *Lead*

*Teacher* status at the completion of performance evaluation during the teacher's designated formal evaluation year in the PGS cycle. If a *Lead Teacher* loses his/her status as a result of the review by the Career Lattice Joint Panel, the additional compensation is discontinued. The *Lead Teacher* would then enter into the involuntary transfer status and be placed in a teaching position according to the involuntary transfer process.

## **Compensation**

*Lead Teachers* will receive compensation above their base pay for additional responsibilities related to the combination of teaching responsibilities, leadership, project implementation, and collegial support.

The Career Lattice compensation structure will be determined based on the *Lead Teachers'* roles and responsibilities.

Supplemental Summer Employment days will continue to be allocated for certain positions as contractually guaranteed.

## **Career Lattice Implementation Plan**

An implementation plan will be developed based on the needs of the school system.

At each phase, the implementation plan includes a number of components, each of which has a timeline and a responsibility matrix that will ensure task completion:

- A transition plan that specifies how current staff in *Lead Teacher*-designated positions can qualify for *Lead Teacher* status (see attached)
- A recruitment plan that attracts high performing skillful teachers to apply to become a *Lead Teacher*
- A communication plan that identifies key stakeholders at all organizational levels (school and district), what they need to know and when they need to know it; and the level of communication for each group (inform, gather input and/or feedback, and get approval).
- A resource plan that identifies human resources needed at all organizational levels (school and district), what they will need to know and how they will learn it; material and technological resources such as web-support, portfolio rubric development, recommendation letter formats, etc.; and logistical resources such as meeting/training locations, timelines and schedules.
- A process-improvement and evaluation plan that includes impact statements, feedback gathering, and ongoing data-gathering and assessment opportunities that

provide information needed to improve the Career Lattice in substance and/or process, as well as evaluate it for impact.

## **Evaluation of Career Lattice**

The Career Lattice shall be evaluated by the Teacher PGS Implementation Team assisted by the Office of Shared Accountability. The Design Team will provide a framework for the evaluation of the project to the Teacher PGS Implementation Team to work with the Office of Shared Accountability to carry out the evaluation of the project. The evaluation will include a formative and summative program evaluation process. The evaluation will be based on the research questions and anticipated outcomes as well as criteria for success established by the Joint Panel and the joint evaluation work group. There will be both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitative measures include data collected about the numbers of lead teachers, demographics of lead teachers, and student achievement data. Qualitative measures include various surveys, focus groups and interviews about the impact of these roles and responsibilities and the satisfaction of the teachers.

## Transition Plan for Career Lattice

Timeline	Activity	Responsible Party
06-07	Design team continues to finalize Career Lattice Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain stakeholder input from MCAASP, MCEA representative groups including Council on Teaching and Learning, Local SEIU 500, and others</li> <li>• Develop and implement communication plan</li> <li>• Set-up Panel and identify members of the panel</li> </ul>	Design Team
07-08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish evaluation process including standards for Lead Teacher</li> <li>• Finalize Lead Teacher selection process including transition of teacher currently in the role</li> <li>• Continue to communicate progress to all stakeholders</li> <li>• Develop with shared accountability evaluation for program</li> <li>• Open application process for Lead Teacher candidates</li> </ul>	Joint Panel  Teacher PGS Implementation Team  Joint Panel
08-09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue application and selection process for Lead Teacher status</li> <li>• Begin consideration of a second phase to provide career lattice opportunities to other unit members</li> </ul>	Joint Panel
09-10	Targets for teachers who are currently in leadership positions <b>or</b> who fill vacancies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20-30 % RT/Content Specialists/SDT's/Literacy Coaches/Math Content Coaches and other identified roles</li> <li>• 30%-50% Consulting Teachers</li> <li>• 30% Instructional specialists</li> <li>• Instructional specialists vacancies will be filled by Lead Teachers</li> <li>• Provide funding for projects in high needs schools and schools not meeting AYP</li> <li>• Continue to transition all teacher lead roles</li> <li>• Continue to transition all new and additional opportunities for teacher leadership roles.</li> </ul>	Joint Panel