**Professional Development & Support Theory of Action and Guiding Principles**

Shelby County Schools has committed to reach Destination 2025 and our 80/90/100% goals. Reaching these goals will require a profound shift in district culture, including in the Professional Development & Support and Academics departments.

In Shelby County Schools, we believe that teachers have the most important job in the district, as our teachers are the primary drivers of our students’ achievement. We believe that teachers can adapt their practice to increase student achievement when they experience high-quality professional learning, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that teachers have the professional development experiences that will enable them to adapt their practice to ensure that our students reach Destination 2025.

To improve professional development, which we define as any experience that teachers engage in to improve their instructional practice, SCS will establish five design principles that all future professional development experiences will embody:

1. **ALIGNED: Professional development must be aligned to SCS’s goals, vision of effective teaching, academic priorities, and evaluation system.**

*First and foremost, any SCS professional development must be directly tied to Destination 2025 and the key pillars of the district’s strategic plan. In addition, PD must be directly aligned to the district’s vision of effective teaching (captured in the TEM or elsewhere), academic priorities (such as literacy, writing, and early childhood education), and needs defined by teacher observations (such as planning, clear delivery of content, etc.).*

1. **DIFFERENTIATED: Professional development must be tailored to individual and collective teacher needs and differentiated by need, content, and grade band.**

*PD must be based on teacher needs (performance, experience, and areas of growth), as well as by their content area and grade-level. SCS uses teacher and student performance data, both qualitative and quantitative, to determine what professional development to offer to meet differentiated needs.*

1. **PRACTICE-BASED: Educators learn best when they have the opportunity to apply what they have learned, so our professional development consistently involves opportunities for practice.**

*High-quality professional development involves practice so that teachers can immediately implement what they have learned in a session rather than “sitting and getting” information. Educators practice in sessions and then also commit to practicing newly learned skills in their classrooms.*

1. **EMPOWERING: Teachers and principals must be able to choose supports that are most aligned to improvement of their practice.**

*In alignment with the strategic plan, principals should have options to choose supports that are most needed for their teachers and students. Teachers should have the ability to reflect on their own instructional strengths and opportunities for improvement, then select professional development experiences that will improve their students’ achievement.*

1. **MEASUREABLE: Professional development’s impact must be measured and evaluated strategically.**

*Professional development is intended to improve teacher performance and student achievement, so we must name the change we expect to see in teacher and student performance as a result of professional development experiences. Given the time and resources professional development consumes, we must measure the effectiveness of PD so that we can determine where to spend more time and resources, given the outcomes that we see. We will track engagement in PD mapped to student achievement and teacher improvement so that we can ensure that we are spending resources on strategies that actually improve teacher performance and ultimately, student achievement.*