

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

I. PURPOSE

To outline the expectations for school leaders within the District and empower principals to make sound, data-driven, and researched-based educational decisions for students while operating schools.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Shelby County Schools District administrators (Superintendent and principal enhancement staff (e.g., Instructional Leadership Directors - ILDs)), principals, assistant/vice principals, and apprentice-principals/assistant principals who work with Shelby County Schools or who are partnering entities providing principals/assistant principal programs.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

Shelby County Schools values the professional commitment to student achievement that principals display as instructional leaders within the District. Effective school leadership substantially impacts student achievement and is a crucial school-based factor contributing to student learning. Shelby County Schools believes that effective leadership is essential for student achievement because it directly ensures that the school environment is ideal for student learning and conducive to effective teaching. Strong school leadership sets the tone and direction for the entire school climate and culture. In addition to instructional leadership, school leaders also play an important role in student achievement by ensuring that operational decisions are made to optimize student learning. Effective school leaders are responsible for creating a school environment that sets high expectations for students and staff; selecting effective teachers to meet the individual needs of the school; making academic programming decisions that foster student learning; and promoting a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. Additionally, effective school leaders shall be held accountable for the achievement of students, acceptable levels of teacher effectiveness, and the efficient supervision and operation of schools.

Shelby County Schools expects school leaders to exhibit high levels of operational

leadership capacity and possess the ability to serve as excellent instructional and academic leaders of the school. Therefore, the District views the principal as the chief academic and operational officer of the school, and authorizes the principal to make management decisions within the school unit that are consistent with law and SCS Board policy.

The District shall promote school leadership by developing, supporting, and rewarding effective school leaders. Guidance from District administration, including the Superintendent and executive level administrators, is instrumental in building effective school leaders.

To support school leaders in promoting student achievement and District accountability, District administrators should familiarize themselves with the needs of school leaders regarding the student behavior, operational, and instructional programs at schools and direct school leaders to resources, when necessary. District administrators are also expected to communicate with school leaders in a responsive manner and provide administrative critique and guidance in decision-making, when appropriate. Additionally, the effective and exemplary service of school leaders should be celebrated and rewarded by District administrators.

To that end, principals designated by the District as high performing shall be given greater autonomy subject to the provisions of the District's academic excellence reform.

Principals

The District believes that school leaders should possess strong professionalism; maintain confidentiality, integrity, fairness, and consistency; stimulate trust within the school and in the school's community; and promote a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. To ensure that schools are staffed with the highest quality school leaders, the Superintendent shall appoint principals to serve as the administrative head of the local school unit.¹ Each principal is responsible for ensuring efficient school operations by adhering to law, state board policy/rules/regulations/minimum standards, and SCS Board policy, and is responsible for informing all staff assigned to the school of all current policies. It is therefore the duty of the principal to:

- Supervise the operation and management of assigned facilities and personnel;
- Assume administrative responsibility and instructional leadership for the planning, management, operation and evaluation of the education program (elementary music, art, and PE classes; secondary support classes; programs for Exceptional Children and English Language Learners; and intervention and enrichment programs) at his/her assigned school as designated by the Superintendent and in accordance with all policies of the Board;
- Prepare and submit to the Superintendent an annual budget request setting forth the plan for the cost of operation for his/her assigned school in accordance with T.C.A. 49-2-

303 b(8);

- Submit recommendations to the Superintendent for the appointment and dismissal of all personnel assigned to his/her school and assign specific duties to assigned personnel (Duties of teachers shall be within their area of licensure and consistent with the policies, rules or contracts of the Board of Education);
- Administer and implement the school behavior and discipline code and require guest passes for all persons other than enrolled students and employees of the school;
- Ensure the preparation, implementation and evaluation of School Improvement Plans;
- Ensure the implementation of the curriculum;
- Participate as appropriate in the employment grievance process in accordance with the policies, rules and/or contracts of the Board of Education;
- Ensure that Board policies and procedures are communicated and followed;
- Take advantage of support to enhance professional practices; and
- Perform duties as assigned by the Superintendent or designee.

Leadership Training for Assistant Principal Positions

The Board of Education recognizes that it is necessary to carefully select and train future school administrators prior to appointment to increase the probability of success. In order to provide qualified job-ready assistant principals, the Shelby County Schools shall conduct or facilitate leadership training for selected candidates. In order to be eligible for appointment to the position of assistant principal, each candidate must meet the standards for the position. Principals and assistant principals are responsible for maintaining a minimum evaluation criteria of satisfactory or above.

Principal Enhancement Staff

Principal Enhancement Staff (e.g., Instructional Leadership Directors - ILDs) are responsible for maintaining minimum evaluation criteria of satisfactory or above.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

A. The Superintendent (or designee) is responsible for implementing this policy.

Legal References:

1. T.C.A. 49-2-303