



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Early Results from Initiative to Extend the Reach of Excellent Teachers: *Higher Student Growth and Teacher Pay, Along With Lessons Learned*

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—Public Impact has released early results and lessons from the first schools to implement Opportunity Culture school models, which extend the reach of excellent teachers and their teams to more students, for more pay, within recurring budgets.

All of the schools that implemented Opportunity Culture models schoolwide showed high growth in reading and math by the second year of implementation. Schools implementing the models gradually showed 42 percent to 70 percent more high growth and substantially less low growth in affected classrooms than comparable classrooms in the same and other schools. Student outcomes of STEM teachers extending their reach were the strongest overall.

At each school, a team of teachers and administrators chose their Opportunity Culture school design and reallocated their school budget to fund higher pay. Teacher pay supplements for excellent teachers extending reach ranged from \$3,500 to \$23,000, averaging about \$10,000. Some schools also paid smaller supplements to additional staff.

In an anonymous survey, 92 to 98 percent of teacher-leaders in schools implementing Opportunity Culture models agreed that teachers who excel in teaching in their schools can reach more students, lead peers and earn more pay. Districts received up to 30 applications per position for Opportunity Culture roles.

In 2014–15, the Opportunity Culture initiative included more than 30 schools, 450 teachers, and 16,000 students, and will include more than 60 schools next year. Teachers in these schools typically reach 33 percent to 300 percent more students than average by using teams, job redesign and digital instruction. The reported student outcomes cover the seven schools that completed their second year of implementation, all of which were high-poverty. More than 30 schools are included in the teacher pay, perception and recruitment data.

“These early results, achieved in pioneering schools by pioneering teachers new to their roles, are just the beginning of what is possible,” said Bryan C. Hassel, co-director of Public Impact. “However, our qualitative research shows that most districts and schools can improve their support for these teachers.” A report released by Public Impact cites multiple areas for improvement, including decisive district leadership, training for teachers in new roles and for principals leading teams of teacher-leaders, protection of planning and collaboration time, evaluation that matches the new teaching roles and supportive state policies.

A dashboard covering [student outcomes](http://opportunityculture.org/data-dashboard/), [teacher perceptions](http://opportunityculture.org/data-dashboard/), and overall Opportunity Culture impact is available at <http://opportunityculture.org/data-dashboard/>. Results are summarized below. A brief outlining nine lessons from the first two Opportunity Culture years is at http://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Opportunity_Culture_Implementation_Early_Lessons_from_the_Field-Public_Impact.pdf. See a list of the lessons at the end of this release.

For more information, please visit www.OpportunityCulture.org. To arrange an interview with Public Impact’s co-director, Dr. Bryan C. Hassel, contact Anne Halstater at Anne_Halstater@publicimpact.com; 919.357.5519.

Summary of Opportunity Culture Data Dashboard Results:

Student outcomes: <http://opportunityculture.org/data-dashboard/student-outcomes/>

All 7 schools in this first cohort are high-poverty.

Whole-School Results: Of the first three schools that implemented school-wide in the first year, two had high growth in both reading and math in the first year. The third school had high growth in reading and math by its second year (subject to state verification, fall 2015).

Gradual Implementation Results: Of the four schools implementing gradually, in their second year ...

- 70% more **students made high growth in Opportunity Culture classrooms** compared to students in the same schools who were not in OC classrooms.
- 42% more **students made high growth in Opportunity Culture classrooms** compared to students in the other schools in the same high-poverty zone not using OC models. Removal of one high-performing school in the non-OC comparison group increases this figure to 89%.
- 50% more students in **non-Opportunity Culture classrooms made low growth**, both within the same schools and in other schools in the same high-poverty zone.
- More **STEM** teachers extended reach than teachers of other subjects, and student outcomes were even more positive in STEM subjects.
- All of the above based on March interim assessment results; year-end data not yet out to compare across classrooms.

Teacher Perceptions: <http://opportunityculture.org/data-dashboard/teacher-perception/>

- A large majority of teachers—both those in the highest-paid roles and those without advanced roles and pay—agreed or strongly agreed with positive statements about all aspects of Opportunity Culture implementation surveyed.
- The strongest areas: agreement that teachers who excel in teaching in Opportunity Culture schools can reach more students; lead peers; and earn more pay.
- The areas with the most room for improvement: ensuring adequate time for teachers to carry out their advanced roles; matching team leader evaluations to their roles; and ensuring that all staff understand how pay supplements are sustainably funded.

Opportunity Culture Impact:

- More than 30 schools implemented Opportunity Culture models in 2014–15, some schoolwide and others implementing the models gradually over two or three years.
- Teachers typically reached 33 percent to 300 percent more students than average.
- More than 150 teachers were in advanced roles with pay to match.
- More than 300 teachers were getting routine on-the-job development by multi-classroom leaders—teacher-leaders selected by their schools or districts for their excellence.
- More than 16,000 students had an Opportunity Culture teacher—selected by their schools or districts for prior teaching excellence—accountable for their learning in at least one core subject.
- Districts launching recruitment by March in the first two years got about 30:1 applications per open position. Those launching later had between 4:1 and 10:1 applications per position. Those with the best results were recruiting for high-poverty schools.
- Teacher pay supplements for excellent teachers extending their reach ranged from \$3,500 to \$23,000 and averaged about \$10,000. All sites but one paid supplements completely within regular budgets, not through grant funds or line-item pay; all are within regular budgets for 2015–16.
- Schools collectively reallocated more than \$1.5 million to higher teacher pay in just the second year.
- Average weekly planning minutes ranged from about 225 to 450 minutes.

Summary of Opportunity Culture Implementation Lessons:

These lessons come from qualitative research based on several sources, including multiple site visits per district, exit slips from school design meetings, teacher surveys and comparison of schools with better, faster positive outcomes to other schools in the first two years of implementation.

Lesson 1: Address Necessary State and District Policy Barriers. Districts and states must identify and address Opportunity Culture (OC) policy barriers before the design process begins, and review annually at midyear in preparation for the next year.

Lesson 2: Establish District Support for Schools' OC Implementation. District leaders must provide timely technical assistance, tools, decision-making power, and transitional support for small, temporary financial shortfalls for school models within [Opportunity Culture Principles](#).

Lesson 3: Support Strong School Leadership for OC Implementation. Principals need training and support to lead a team of teacher-leaders and other teachers who extend their reach, and they need paid career advancement options that let them remain directly responsible for student outcomes.

Lesson 4: Build and Support Effective Design Teams. Form district and school design teams with clear goals, roles, and decision-making power, staffed with individuals committed to OC Principles; top district leaders must maintain direction and support to implement and scale up the Opportunity Culture designs.

Lesson 5: Create Complete School Design Plans. School designs should include long-term and next-year detail about roles, financial sustainability, technology, schedules, and how teachers will work together.

Lesson 6: Clarify MCL Roles and Build Teaching Team Leadership. Multi-classroom leaders (MCLs)—essential in schools that want to reach all or nearly all students with excellent teachers—need clear roles, advance training, ongoing coaching in leadership and management skills, and protected time to plan and lead.

Lesson 7: Build Schedules that Let Teams Collaborate. Schedule and protect additional in-school time for OC teachers to plan, alone and as a team; review student work; and improve together during the school year.

Lesson 8: Hire Early and Be Selective. Recruit early, advertise widely using multiple methods, make links to Opportunity Culture job openings obvious on the district's website, and use the [materials](#) on OpportunityCulture.org to recruit and be selective among candidates.

Lesson 9: Give Everyone the Right Data to Improve. Interim and annual data should be collected and reported to match OC roles, to help teachers improve during the school year and help principals lead well; consistent interim assessments would help OC teachers.

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About Public Impact

Public Impact is a national organization whose mission is to dramatically improve learning outcomes for all children in the U.S., with a special focus on students who are not served well. We are a team of professionals from many backgrounds, including former teachers. We are researchers, thought leaders, tool-builders, and on-the-ground consultants who work with leading education reformers.

Learn more about an Opportunity Culture on the revamped [OpportunityCulture.org](#) website, which provides [tools](#)—all free—to build an Opportunity Culture, [videos](#), and related [resources](#). Districts reporting data about implementation will be eligible for free recruitment assistance in 2015–16.