



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indy Teachers Union Votes Highly Paid Opportunity Culture Roles Into Contract

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—The Indianapolis school board and teachers union on Thursday became the first in the country to include Opportunity Culture roles in their new [contract](#), offering pay supplements of up to \$18,300 for teachers leading teams—35 percent of the district’s average salary. That comes on top of a major base pay raise—the first in five years—for teachers across the board. Those pay decisions mean that in 2016–17, for example, a 16-year teacher will be able to earn \$77,700 by taking on the highest-paid Opportunity Culture role, which involves leading a team of four to six teachers.

The [Opportunity Culture initiative](#), created by Public Impact, includes seven districts in five states in 2015–16. Opportunity Culture models extend the reach of excellent teachers and their teams to more students, for more pay, within budget. Schools provide additional school-day time for planning and collaboration, often with teacher-leaders leading teams and providing frequent, on-the-job development.

A team of teachers and administrators at each school decides how to redo schedules and reallocate money to fund pay supplements permanently, in contrast to temporarily grant-funded programs. Opportunity Culture schools in Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) are expected to reallocate funds primarily from vacant positions to fund the supplements.

The Indianapolis Education Association voted to include multiple Opportunity Culture roles in the contract, with the highest pay for multi-classroom leaders, who continue to teach while leading a team. These “MCLs” coach, co-teach, co-plan and collaborate with their team teachers, while taking accountability for the learning outcomes of all the students the team serves. In IPS, an MCL who leads a team of one teacher and a paraprofessional known as a reach associate will earn a \$6,800 stipend. MCLs who lead a team of two to three teachers and a reach associate will earn an \$11,400 stipend. Those leading a team of four to six teachers and two reach associates will earn \$18,300 stipends.

All teachers teaching on an MCL-led team will earn \$1,300 supplements, if the school can afford to do this for each team in the school.

Of the 120 large-district contracts in the National Council on Teacher Quality’s national database, most stipends are less than \$3,000, and the biggest specified leadership stipend (for department chairs in Wichita, Kansas) is \$8,614. The Indianapolis Public Schools’ maximum Opportunity Culture supplement of \$18,300 is more than double that amount.

The contract also includes \$6,800 supplements for “expanded-impact teachers,” great teachers who extend their reach to at least 33 percent more students with paraprofessional support, but who do not lead teams.

The contract was ratified by 93 percent of the union members and approved in a 6–0 vote of the IPS Board of School Commissioners.

“We are delighted and impressed by the collaborative environment and genuine commitment we see on the part of both the district and the union in Indianapolis,” said former teacher and Public Impact senior vice

president Lucy Steiner, who is leading Public Impact’s assistance to IPS schools with these roles. “We will be working with the district and schools to ensure that teachers have the support they need to be effective in these new roles.” The Joyce Foundation is providing partial support to launch Public Impact’s work with IPS.

In early results from the first schools to implement Opportunity Culture school models, all schools implementing their models schoolwide showed high growth in reading and math by the second year of implementation; interim student growth results were also promising at schools implementing their models more gradually. Student outcomes of STEM teachers extending their reach were the strongest overall.

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.

IPS is the second collective bargaining district in which the local teachers union has supported Opportunity Culture roles, but the first to include the roles in its contract for all teachers.

The changes are part of an ambitious strategic plan for the district, under the leadership of [Superintendent Lewis Ferebee](#). On Wednesday evening, IPS will hold an educator excellence symposium open to the press at Marian University designed to inspire excellence and highlight the changes, including Opportunity Culture.

For more information, please visit www.OpportunityCulture.org. To arrange an interview with Public Impact, contact Sharon Keschull Barrett at Sharon.Barrett@publicimpact.com; 919.929.4544.

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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 of teachers and principals](#), and related [resources](#). Funding for development of resources to help schools design and implement Opportunity Culture models and support teachers taking on new roles has been provided by [national foundations](#).

Educators who have worked in Opportunity Culture schools have begun [publishing columns](#) about their work on RealClearEducation.com. On EducationNext.org, Public Impact co-directors Emily Ayscue Hassel and Bryan C. Hassel recently [called for elimination of teacher evaluation](#) in districts that do not also provide on-the-job development and well-paid, advanced roles to teachers.