



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cumberland County Schools Joins Opportunity Culture to Reach All Students with Excellent Teaching

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—Under Superintendent Marvin Connelly, Jr., Cumberland County Schools has become the eleventh district in North Carolina to join the national [Opportunity Culture initiative](#), which extends the reach of excellent teachers and their teams to more students, for more pay, within schools' recurring budgets.

The district, based in Fayetteville, N.C., will use Opportunity Culture roles to provide new opportunities for leadership and support for teachers, to help with recruitment and retention, and to reach every student with excellent teaching. The roles provide intensive support to all Opportunity Culture educators and create paid career paths that let great teachers advance without leaving the classroom. They have produced outstanding student growth in other Opportunity Culture schools.

The district received Advanced Teaching Roles status and a small grant this month from the state to assist with Opportunity Culture planning and implementation.

“Every day throughout Cumberland County Schools, there are teachers who are making a positive impact and changing students' lives,” said Superintendent Marvin Connelly, Jr. “Through Opportunity Culture, these impactful teachers will be able to reach even more students while increasing their salary and building our community. It is a win-win for all.”

The national Opportunity Culture initiative, founded and led by North Carolina-based Public Impact, is now in more than 45 sites in 10 states.

Cumberland County Schools will work with Public Impact to design their Opportunity Culture plans and begin implementation in fall 2021, with plans to implement in 12 schools the first year.

Multi-Classroom Leadership is the foundation of an Opportunity Culture. Each school's design and implementation team, which includes teachers, uses Multi-Classroom Leadership and other roles to reach more students with high-standards, personalized instruction—one hallmark of great teachers. Multi-classroom leaders (MCLs) lead a small teaching team, providing instructional guidance and frequent, on-the-job development, while continuing to teach part of the time. The schools redesign schedules to provide additional school-day time for co-planning, coaching and collaboration. MCLs typically lead the introduction of more effective curricula, instructional methods, classroom management and schoolwide culture-building.

Accountable for the results of all students in the team, multi-classroom leaders earn supplements averaging 20 percent (and up to 50 percent) of teacher pay, within the regular school budget. The design teams reallocate school budgets to fund pay supplements permanently, in contrast to temporarily grant-funded programs.

Cumberland has 89 schools and over 3,000 certified teachers. They serve 50,880 students, of whom about 45 percent are Black, 28 percent are white, and 14 percent are Hispanic, with about 78 percent eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

In the 2017–18 school year, Opportunity Culture schools in North Carolina—the largest implementation state so far—outpaced the state results in student growth. While only 27 percent of non-Opportunity Culture

schools in North Carolina exceeded student learning growth targets, nearly double that— 53 percent—of Opportunity Culture schools exceeded growth.

In early 2018, [researchers](#) at the Brookings Institution and American Institutes for Research released a study showing the effect Opportunity Culture multi-classroom leaders can have: Teachers who were on average at the 50th percentile in student learning gains, and who then joined teams led by multi-classroom leaders, produced learning gains equivalent to those of teachers from the 75th to 85th percentile in math and from the 66th to 72nd percentile in reading in six of seven statistical models. Nearly three-fourths of the schools in the AIR-Brookings study were Title I. More recent data gathered by Public Impact show that by the fourth year of implementation, as MCLs reach more students, Opportunity Culture schools' odds of high growth are more than 50 percent higher than schools without MCLs.

In 2013-14, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools became the first district in the nation to implement Opportunity Culture. In subsequent years, districts across the country began to implement Opportunity Culture, including the North Carolina districts of Cabarrus County Schools, Vance County Schools, Edgecombe County Schools, Guilford County Schools, Halifax County Schools, Hertford County Public Schools, and Lexington City Schools. The North Carolina districts of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools and Wilson County Schools will also implement Opportunity Culture in fall 2021.

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About Public Impact

Public Impact's mission is to improve education dramatically for all students, especially low-income students, students of color, and other students whose needs historically have not been well met. We are a team of professionals from many backgrounds, including former teachers and principals. 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 OpportunityCulture.org website, which provides free Opportunity Culture tools, educator [videos](#) and [columns](#), and [instructional leadership and excellence 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](#). Hear directly from educators who have worked in Opportunity Culture schools in [columns](#) published on national and state news sites.

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