



## News Release

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### **Arkansas Expands State Opportunity Culture Initiative to Extend Reach of Excellent Teachers**

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—As part of its commitment to implement [Opportunity Culture](#) in schools across the state, the Arkansas Department of Education is supporting its third cohort of school districts this year joining the national initiative to extend the reach of excellent teachers and their teams, for more pay, within regular school budgets. The school districts of Brinkley, Crossett, Earle and Osceola will begin implementing Opportunity Culture roles in the 2021–22 school year.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) committed to spreading Opportunity Culture in its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan; Arkansas districts already using Opportunity Culture roles are North Little Rock, Forrest City, Gentry and Lincoln Consolidated. Nationally, Opportunity Culture, founded by Public Impact, is used in more than 45 districts and charter school organizations in 10 states.

“We are excited to expand the Opportunity Culture model in Arkansas. We believe that this evidence-based model provides an innovative structure for districts to extend the reach of highly effective teachers to more students,” ADE Deputy Commissioner Ivy Pfeffer said. “Opportunity Culture serves as a model of innovation for districts around the state and enhances our Teach Arkansas initiative’s goals of recruiting and retaining the best educators in the state. It also perfectly aligns with 2017 legislation that created the Arkansas Educator Career Continuum, which provides educators the opportunity to lead from the classroom. By implementing and expanding best practices such as this, we will ensure every student has access to exceptional educators and that learning thrives.”

The work is led by the Arkansas Department of Education’s Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Opportunity Culture roles appeal to many districts that want to improve teacher recruitment and retention and strengthen student learning. The roles extend the reach of excellent teachers and their teams to many more students with excellent, personalized instruction, 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.

[Multi-Classroom Leadership](#) is the foundation of an Opportunity Culture. Each school’s design and implementation team, which includes teachers, determines how to use Multi-Classroom Leadership and other roles to reach more of their 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 substantially higher supplements averaging 20 percent (and up to 50 percent) of teacher pay, within the regular school budget. The school design teams reallocate school budgets to fund pay supplements permanently, in contrast to temporarily

grant-funded programs. Grant funding from the state will not be used for pay supplements, but for planning and implementing Opportunity Culture and associated professional development.

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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 75<sup>th</sup> to 85<sup>th</sup> percentile in math and from the 66<sup>th</sup> to 72<sup>nd</sup> 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.

[Brinkley Public Schools](#), led by Superintendent Brenda Poole, has two schools and 49 teachers. They serve 546 students, of whom 61 percent are Black and 35 percent are white.

“As our district has struggled with teacher recruitment and retention, we’re looking forward to what Opportunity Culture roles can do to help us attract high-quality teacher-leaders,” Poole said.

[Crossett School District](#), led by Superintendent Gary Williams, has three schools and 136 teachers. They serve 1,808 students, of whom 63 percent are white and 32 percent are Black. The district has been improving teacher retention and school curriculum, and will implement Opportunity Culture roles to continue those improvements and to extend the reach of teachers with great instructional practices.

“Crossett School District is excited about the partnership with Public Impact, and we are looking forward to being a part of Opportunity Culture,” Williams said. “We believe the retention and recruitment of quality teachers are essential to the success of our district, and a big part of this is supporting teachers and providing opportunities for professional growth. Opportunity Culture will provide both for our teachers as they continue their excellent work of serving our students.”

[Earle School District](#), led by Superintendent Tish Knowles, has two schools and 53 teachers. They serve 588 students, of whom 97 percent are Black.

“Because we compete with higher-paying districts near us, we look forward to how Opportunity Culture roles can help us improve teacher retention,” Knowles said.

[Osceola School District](#), led by Superintendent Alfred Hogan, has four schools and 108 teachers. They serve 1,202 students, of whom 79 percent are Black and 15 percent are white. Opportunity Culture roles appeal to the district in its quest to improve student academic success and become one of the fastest-improving districts in Arkansas.

“We are looking forward to the process of using Opportunity Culture to transform teaching and learning for the students of Osceola School District,” Hogan said.

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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 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 Kebschull Barrett at [Sharon.Barrett@publicimpact.com](mailto:Sharon.Barrett@publicimpact.com); 919.590.4154.