



News Release

January 28, 2021

Contact: Sharon Kebschull Barrett, Sharon.Barrett@publicimpact.com; 919.590.4154

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilson County, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Districts Win North Carolina Advanced Teaching Roles Funding to Implement Opportunity Culture

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—The North Carolina State Board of Education awarded Advanced Teaching Roles grants to Wilson County Schools and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in fall 2020 to join the national Opportunity Culture initiative. The districts are using their grant funding this year to design and strengthen Opportunity Culture plans for implementation in fall 2021.

The districts intend to use Opportunity Culture roles to help address difficulties in recruiting and retaining great teachers, and to strengthen student learning. The roles extend the reach of excellent teachers and their teams to many more students, 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 national Opportunity Culture initiative, founded and led by North Carolina-based Public Impact, now includes more than 45 districts and charter organizations in 10 states.

Public Impact will assist these districts in planning and early implementation. Fayetteville, N.C.-based Cumberland County Schools also received Advanced Teaching Roles status and a small grant this month from the state to assist with Opportunity Culture planning and implementation.

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. Funding from the Advanced Roles pilot will not be used for pay supplements, but for planning and implementing Opportunity Culture and associated professional development.

Wilson County and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County will use the multi-classroom leader role along with others to be determined, such as reach associates and team reach teachers.

In the 2017–18 school year, Opportunity Culture schools in North Carolina—the largest implementation state so far, with about 80 schools—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.

[Wilson County Schools](#), led by Superintendent Lane Mills, has 26 schools and about 600 teachers. They serve 10,508 students, of whom about 44 percent are Black, 29 percent are white, and 22 percent are Hispanic. Forty-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

“We are excited about the opportunities the Advanced Teaching Roles grant will provide for our schools and our district as we work hard to recruit and retain the very best educators to guide and inspire our students,” Mills said. “By implementing the Opportunity Culture model, we will be able to improve the quality of newly hired teachers, assist current teachers and add to the instructional knowledge base of our school system to increase student achievement. This grant will help lead an advancement in teaching and create pathways to encourage educators to grow in their profession while still continuing to teach.”

[Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools](#), led by Interim Superintendent Tricia McManus, has 81 schools and about 4,200 teachers. They serve about 55,000 students, of whom about 40 percent are white, 29 percent are Black, and 25 percent are Hispanic.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for us to attract and retain the most qualified educators," McManus said. "One of the biggest roadblocks to our growth and success is the availability of a qualified work force. This funding is an investment in our future."

North Carolina's Advanced Roles pilot began in 2016, with the school districts of Vance County, Edgecombe County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, all of which use Opportunity Culture, as three of the first six districts selected. Guilford County Schools, Halifax County Schools, Hertford County Public Schools and Lexington City Schools received funding in subsequent rounds to implement Opportunity Culture. The grants received this year were part of the final round of awards under the pilot, which will now be a program that includes annual requests for proposals.

###

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; 919.590.4154.