Direct Evidence Of Effectiveness

* Strong student learning gains for Multi-Classroom Leaders in two rigorous independent evaluations. A 2018 study by Brookings and AIR for the CALDER Center looked at implementation in three early Opportunity Culture districts; a Texas Tech University study looked at outcomes for the Ector County, Texas, district during the 2020–21 pandemic year. The research found that, on average, teachers who joined teams led by Opportunity Culture multi-classroom leaders (who had prior records of achieving high growth) moved from producing 50th percentile student learning growth to 77th percentile student learning growth. Those results equate to an extra 0.2 to 0.8 years of learning in reading, and an extra 0.3 to 0.7 years of learning in math, using a conversion method from Stanford researchers.* In the Texas study, the nearly 2,000 English learners taught by Opportunity Culture teams had even larger reading gains—again using the Stanford researchers’ method, that meant an extra 1.3 years of learning compared with other English learners.

* Much higher likelihood of schoolwide high growth. By the fourth year of implementation, Opportunity Culture schools are over 50 percent more likely than non-Opportunity Culture schools to have schoolwide high growth, according to Public Impact’s analysis of state test data.

* High levels of teacher satisfaction. Fully 98 percent of MCLs and 90 percent of educators in all Opportunity Culture roles want Opportunity Culture implementation to continue in their schools, according to an anonymous national educator survey.

Research Supporting Key Elements Of Opportunity Culture Designs

* Teacher effectiveness is the single largest influence on student learning. Research over decades shows that teachers vary significantly in the student learning gains they elicit. If low-income students were consistently assigned to high-growth teachers instead of low-growth teachers, they would close the achievement gap with their advantaged peers in three to four years.

* But students—especially low-income students and students of color—lack that consistent access. Research shows that these students are significantly less likely to be assigned to top-performing teachers.

* On-the-job professional learning produces the best student achievement impact. Multi-Classroom Leadership makes possible all the qualities of effective teacher professional development identified by rigorous research, summarized by Garet et al as including: a focus on content knowledge; opportunities for active learning; coherence with other learning activities; collective participation of teachers from the same school, grade, or subject; and longer duration of the activity.

* In surveys, teachers report very little of this kind of coaching and professional learning. A national Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation survey found that only 12 percent of U.S. teachers had received even weekly coaching in the past year. Fully 51 percent reported receiving no coaching at all.

* Research indicates that school principals’ “span of control” is far too large compared to other professions. Bain & Company’s research found that the average manager of professionals leads a team of five, while the average U.S. principal manages 47 people. The report calls for schools to adopt “distributed leadership” structures so that principals can manage teacher-leaders, using multi-classroom leaders as an example.

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