



News Release

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Contact: Sharon Kebschull Barrett, communications@publicimpact.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Record Number of School Systems to Begin Using Opportunity Culture® Staffing Design

25 Systems Funded to Join National Initiative of Innovative, Higher-Paid Roles Proven to Increase Learning

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—With state funding in New Mexico and North Carolina and private funding in Oklahoma, 25 school systems will join the national Opportunity Culture® initiative in 2026, extending the reach of excellent teaching to more students, for more pay, within regular budgets. The initiative's designs have boosted student learning and reduced vacancies nationally.

In Oklahoma, applications are being accepted now for 16 school systems to receive support for innovative staffing redesign and professional learning for educators in new roles. Up to eight systems will begin planning their redesign, using proven Opportunity Culture models that fit district priorities, as early as February to implement in the 2026–27 school year, and the remainder will design this fall. The Oklahoma Public School Resource Center is conducting extensive outreach to school districts and charter networks statewide to encourage them to apply to Public Impact, founder of the Opportunity Culture initiative. Public Impact anticipates collaborating with many partner organizations to mesh this work with ongoing efforts in the state. A private philanthropy is funding the design work as well as an evaluation of the effect on student learning and teacher vacancies in Oklahoma.

In New Mexico, state leaders appropriated three years of funding for innovative staffing redesign to increase educator satisfaction and student learning. The Opportunity Culture initiative received the contract to support up to seven school systems in planning their redesigns. That includes Carlsbad Municipal Schools, which in 2023 became the first New Mexico system to use these models in three schools, leading to reduced teacher vacancies and increased student learning; the models will be in use in all its traditional schools by the 2026–27 school year. The state is also rolling out high-quality instructional materials and methods in some of the same schools, and funding will support evaluation of all sites' outcomes.

In North Carolina, the Alamance-Burlington and Mooresville districts received state advanced teaching roles grants to plan their Opportunity Culture designs, joining 25 other districts, and more than 300 schools, already using the designs in the state. This grant program, now part of the state's recurring budget, was created after Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) worked with Public Impact to become the first in the nation to use the designs in 2013–14. Its initial pilot was funded by local philanthropists and the district's own investment. The state grant program has enjoyed consistent bipartisan support, increased pay for thousands of educators, and achieved strong schoolwide learning results overall.

Nationally, Public Impact expects more systems to join in 2026, and several other states are considering similar efforts.

The Opportunity Culture initiative is the nation's largest and most successful school staffing design effort; students gain an extra half-year of learning, on average, every year, according to third-party [research](#), and Public Impact®



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annual, anonymous [surveys](#) show strong educator support and satisfaction. More than [1,000 schools](#) nationally are implementing or planning their Opportunity Culture designs, serving over 255,000 students in 2024–25 alone.

In 2024–25, Title I schools in [North Carolina](#) whose designs met Opportunity Culture certification standards were more than twice as likely to exceed growth expectations than other Title I schools in the state; those reaching 100% of students in year 4 and beyond with Opportunity Culture teaching teams were three times as likely to exceed growth expectations. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is reaching nearly 180 schools this year; its certified schools were three times as likely to exceed growth targets compared to others in the state in 2024–25.

Opportunity Culture staffing design affects both instruction and human resources. Schools create [Multi-Classroom Leader®](#) (MCL™) teaching teams, which are led by a teacher with a record of high-growth student learning. A team of teachers and administrators at each school determines the exact team design, and schools vary significantly in their design, curricula, and instruction. Schools can receive certification from Public Impact, by following a set of design standards correlated with student learning growth.

Multi-Classroom Leader teams may include teachers who extend their reach to more students and advanced paraprofessionals who focus on small-group tutoring during the school day. Studies indicate that learning growth of students taught by team teachers rises after teachers join MCL teams, so that more teachers qualify for MCL roles as they spread through a school or district.

These roles all receive higher pay that is sustainable through reallocations of regular budgets. Multi-Classroom Leader pay supplements have consistently averaged more than 20 percent of state base pay, or \$13,352 in 2024-25, and are as high as \$25,000. The supplements are making it possible for some teachers to reach [six-figure salaries](#).

Anonymous, annual surveys over a decade show that 97% to 99% of teachers in Multi-Classroom Leader roles want the roles to continue in their schools. For teachers in all Opportunity Culture roles, that response has risen steadily to over 90% in the most recent survey.

A [McKinsey analysis](#) indicates that learning results like these boost the economy substantially. This adds jobs and tax revenues to fund national, state, and local priorities. McKinsey included Opportunity Culture models in its [Covid learning recovery recommendations](#).

An increasing number of sites across the country have adopted instructional materials and assessments that are research-based, high-standards and supportive of small-group teaching and tutoring to ensure that all students grow. Early Opportunity Culture sites did not have this advantage, and Public Impact has called for adoption of stronger materials. Similarly, Public Impact expects to continue supporting schools adopting technology, including AI-driven tools, to help teachers and teacher-leaders nationally.

“We are confident of continued success as the initiative scales up, because the drivers of success in Opportunity Culture design are the educators,” said Public Impact Co-President Bryan C. Hassel. “We are honored to support their work and advocate for higher pay, funded sustainably, in each location.”



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How Districts Use Opportunity Culture Models

Each school forms a design and implementation team of teachers and administrators that determines how to use Opportunity Culture roles to reach more students with excellent teaching. The design teams reallocate school budgets to permanently fund pay supplements for those in Opportunity Culture roles, in contrast to temporary grant-funded programs.

The [Multi-Classroom Leader](#) role is the cornerstone role, and their teams may include those in Team Reach Teacher™ roles, for teachers who—critically in locations with [teacher shortages](#)—directly teach more students, typically without raising instructional group sizes, for more pay. This avoids filling a portion of teacher vacancies with long-term substitutes. The team gets support and [MCL-guided tutoring](#) from advanced paraprofessionals in the Reach Associate™ role, which may also be filled by yearlong, paid teacher residents.

Schools earn Certified Opportunity Culture School® status by following design standards correlated with student learning growth, allowing them to use the Opportunity Culture name and titles.

Since 2013, 90 sites in 17 states and the District of Columbia have used the models, and in that time, Opportunity Culture educators earned an estimated \$107 million in extra pay, as of 2024-25. See [Opportunity Culture stats](#) for more.

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About Public Impact®

The Public Impact mission is to improve education **dramatically** for **all** students, especially students whose needs have not yet been well met. 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 the Opportunity Culture initiative on the [OpportunityCulture.org](#) website. To arrange an interview with Public Impact, contact Sharon Kebschull Barrett at communications@publicimpact.com.