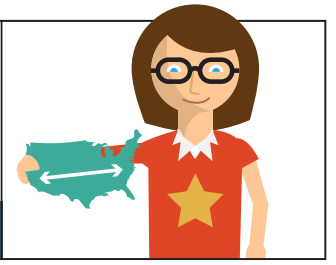


AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



INTRODUCTION

If you are an excellent teacher, or one who aspires to excellence, you probably did not choose teaching for the pay and career advancement potential. You teach because you thrill at untapped potential. You revel in breakthrough moments. **You change destiny: not just what students know, but how they envision and then make their futures come true.** Despite the challenges—and there are many—that is why you teach. If you are an excellent teacher, or one who aspires to excellence, schools need far more like you, and they need you to expand your impact and power. Schools must return to you the respect that you show students.

If you are an administrative or education policy leader, you want to reach as many students as possible with excellent teaching and learning, within the budgets available to you.

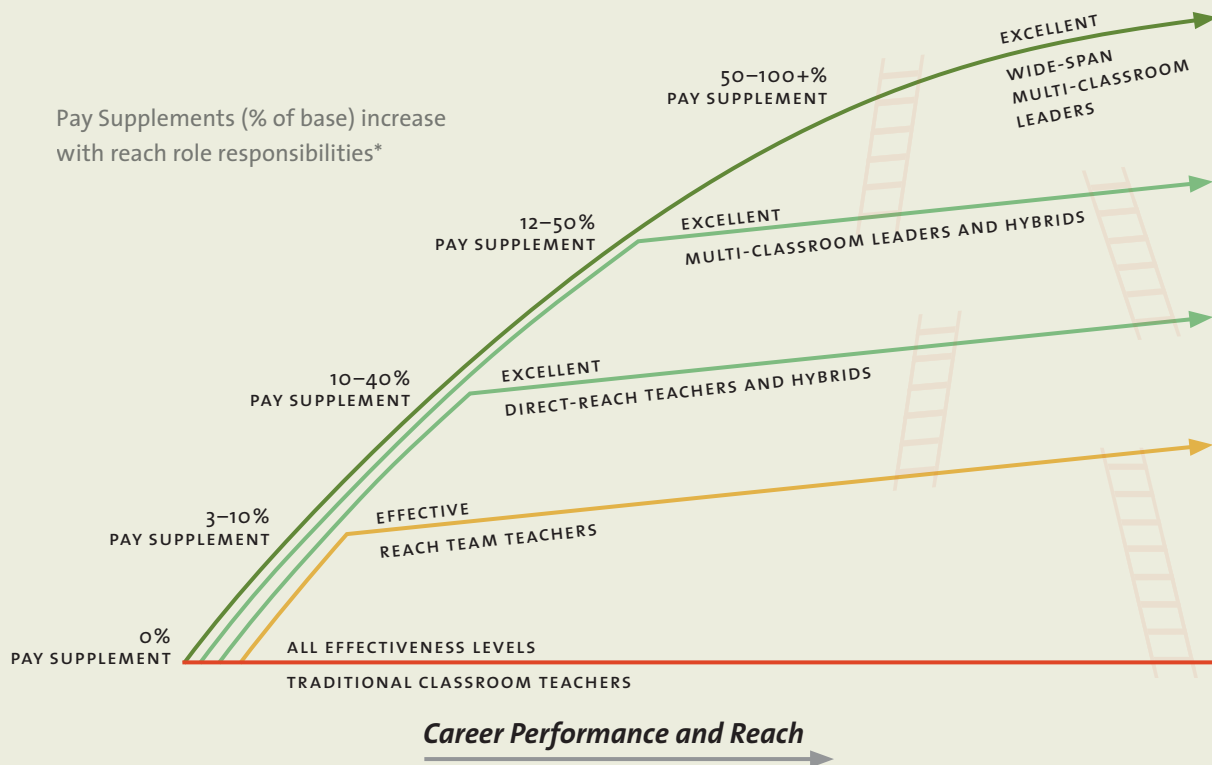
Imagine this: Schools where all teachers can improve their teaching and are rewarded for getting better. Imagine schools where teachers focus on their strengths and interests, and they have school-day time to plan and collaborate in teams. Imagine schools where teachers who achieve excellence can multiply their impact by giving more students access to their teaching—and can lead peers while continuing to teach.

Imagine teaching as a profession that attracts the best and the brightest. Imagine career advancement paths and salaries competitive with highly paid professions. And imagine a teaching profession with a reputation for developing and retaining great teachers through all of these opportunities.

Rather than being burdened with conditions that sometimes make teachers wonder why they became teachers, **what if teaching were so full of opportunities and outstanding peers that teachers enjoyed the challenge and always felt proud to teach?** What if teachers' reputations were enhanced by being part of a selective, well-paid, high-performing profession? We call this an **Opportunity Culture**, because all teachers have paid career opportunities dependent upon their excellence, leadership, and student reach. Development toward excellence is possible for all staff.

Some schools across the U.S. are already creating an Opportunity Culture for their teachers and students. (See OpportunityCulture.org.)

FIGURE 1. Whole Career's Worth of Learning, Advancement, and Pay Opportunities



*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of average pay.

Unfortunately though, advancement opportunities in most schools today remove teachers from direct responsibility for students, increase workloads, confer little real authority to lead peers, and either pay no more or provide only temporary pay increases from grants. Most do not make the best use of great teachers' precious time by magnifying their impact on student learning.

Opportunities are limited because nearly all teachers work alone with one class or a few classes of students. And teachers spend large portions of their time on tasks that, in other professions, would be handled by paraprofessionals or technology.

EXCELLENT TEACHING MUST NOT BE IGNORED

You certainly know how important good teaching is, but you may not have realized how essential *truly excellent* teaching is. Research continues to confirm that today's top 25 percent of teachers help students make well over a year of learning growth—or about three times as much growth as the bottom 25 percent of teachers produce. This high growth is essential to help students who start behind catch up, and to help students who are on track leap forward like their peers in the highest-achieving nations. With just today's "good growth," students cannot catch up or leap ahead. Students need excellent teachers consistently, year after year.

Moreover, all students need the higher-order thinking and social, emotional, and organizational skills that great teachers develop so well in their students.

SCHOOL DESIGNS IN AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE

To create an Opportunity Culture that helps far more students excel, teachers need new school models. These models must "extend the reach" of great teachers and provide career paths enabling all teachers to pursue excellence. With input from teachers and other experts, Public Impact has published numerous school models that redesign teachers' jobs and, in some cases, use age- and child-appropriate technology to put excellent teachers in charge of more students' learning and other teachers' development, *for significantly more pay* (see page 4). **Multi-Classroom Leadership**, **Elementary Specialization teams**, blended learning "**Time-Technology Swaps**," and small **class-size increases** (within limits, and by a teacher's choice) extend teachers' reach and save teachers time. For places with extreme shortages of excellent teaching, overall or in certain subjects, excellent teachers can use technology to reach students anywhere—using tools like webcams and online whiteboards—with help from on-site paraprofessionals who nurture the whole child.



A Teacher's Impact =
Student Outcomes x
Number of Students Reached

Great teachers can reach more students and focus their time on the teaching roles that personalize and inspire great learning. Most models create teams that enable new and solid teachers to learn from outstanding peers and have the chance to excel and advance their careers, while earning more and contributing to excellent student outcomes immediately. (See Figure 2, page 3.)

In an Opportunity Culture, models of extended reach combined with rigorous teacher selection let schools maximize the number and impact of excellent teachers through:

- * **Induction** delivered by proven, excellent, accountable teachers
- * **Planning time** built into the school day
- * **Collaboration and teamwork** built into the school day
- * **Development** that is part of daily teaching, led by teacher-leaders accountable for student outcomes, and customized to individual teachers and their students
- * **Leadership** positions that are well-paid, fully accountable, and fully empowered to lead teams
- * **Respect for teachers' time** by using technology, paraprofessional support, and purposeful scheduling to give teachers more time for the activities above—and to reach more students
- * **Evaluations** that help teachers pursue excellence, and help schools offer the right career advancement opportunities
- * **Career advancement paths** that recognize contributions
- * **Pay that is much higher** on average, and even higher at the top—commensurate with excellence, reach, and leadership

Using reach models, all teachers can earn more, and excellent teachers who lead while teaching can earn far more (see Figure 1, page 1). Because teachers are reaching more students, schools can pay them more with regular funding, rather than relying on temporary grants. In the past several decades, per-pupil spending has increased about 150 percent in real terms. Teachers' pay has increased a mere 11 percent, as have work hours, leaving hourly pay flat. When budgets rise in the future, school models that value excellent teaching can focus funding increases on those teachers accountable for students' outcomes. See our [Pay Teachers More](#) publications for more.

A HIGHLY PAID, HIGH-IMPACT PROFESSION

In an Opportunity Culture, the teaching profession is full of outstanding opportunities and peers, and the reputation of every teacher is enhanced. In an Opportunity Culture:

- * **Hiring is selective**, through screening for academic success and competencies for great teaching and leading
- * **Teaching roles** are varied and use teachers' strengths, develop teachers, and reach more students with excellence
- * **Career advancement** is possible without leaving teaching. Teachers advance by reaching more students and leading peers, for more pay. See details on our [career paths page](#)
- * **Teachers' impact** on students and peers increases as excellence in teaching and leadership increase

- * **Job flexibility** is high. By using teams *and* extending teachers' reach, schools make part-time, professional jobs possible within budget, and technology allows great teachers to teach students in need anywhere
- * **Teacher retention** is high: The best teachers keep teaching
- * **Peer teachers** are highly capable and committed to excellence
- * **Dismissal** and low performance are rare, because few teachers incapable of excellence enter teaching
- * **Teacher power** increases, especially for great teachers, in schools and the profession overall

AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE FOR ALL

Students need excellent teaching consistently. Excellent teachers and ones working hard to achieve excellence truly are schools' most important assets. Schools and districts really must provide career advancement paths that let teachers continue teaching; pay more for excellence, leadership and reach; increase great teachers' impact on students and peers; and free time for collaboration and development—and provide these opportunities sustainably, not temporarily. You can advocate for **new school models** and for **policies** supporting an **Opportunity Culture** for teaching and learning. Expanding the prevalence, power, and impact of excellent teachers within their schools and the profession must become schools' No. 1 priority. (See Figure 3 below.)

Learn more about how new school models help great teachers expand their impact and good teachers develop their full potential at OpportunityCulture.org.

FIGURE 2.
OPPORTUNITY CULTURE PRINCIPLES

Teams of teachers and school leaders must choose and tailor models to:

1. Reach more students with excellent teachers and their teams
2. Pay teachers more for extending their reach
3. Fund pay within regular budgets
4. Provide protected in-school time and clarity about how to use it for planning, collaboration, and development
5. Match authority and accountability to each person's responsibilities



FIGURE 3. Opportunity Culture Virtuous Cycle

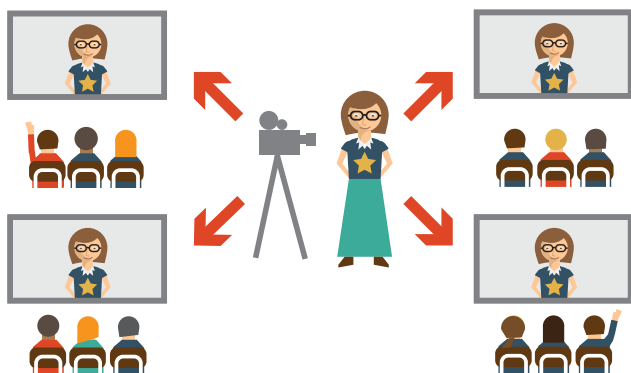


FIGURE 4. School Model Snapshots



MULTI-CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP

Teachers with leadership skills both teach and lead teams or “pods” of other teachers in order to share strategies and best practices for classroom success. Responsible for achieving high growth for all classrooms in the pod, the teacher-leader determines how students spend time and tailors teachers’ roles according to their strengths.



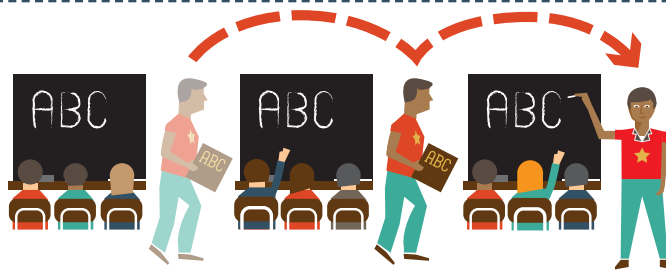
REMOTE TEACHING

Schools without enough excellent teachers can enlist accountable remote teachers down the street or across the nation. Remote teachers use technology to provide live, but not in-person, instruction, while on-site teammates manage administrative duties and develop the whole child.



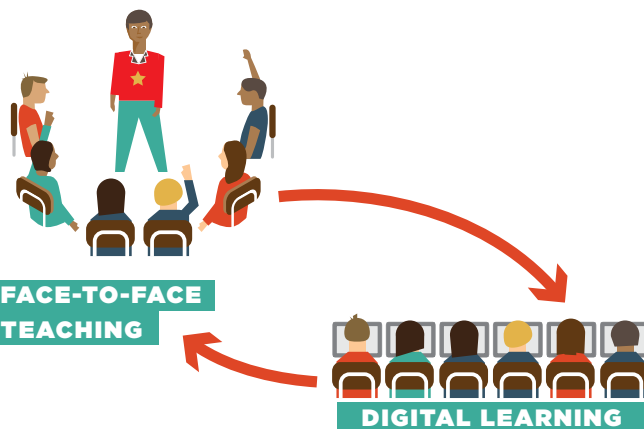
CLASS-SIZE INCREASES

Excellent teachers teach larger classes, by choice and within limits, in some cases shifting students from other teachers’ classrooms.



ELEMENTARY SPECIALIZATION

A school’s best teachers teach only their best subject(s)—such as math/science or language arts/social studies—while teammates take care of students the rest of the time and cover administrative work. This allows specialized teachers to instruct multiple classrooms of students and gain more time for planning and collaboration.



TIME-TECHNOLOGY SWAPS

Students spend part of the day engaged in self-paced digital learning. Digital instruction replaces enough of top teachers’ time that they can teach more students, using face-to-face teaching time for higher-order learning and personalized follow-up. Teachers can use part of their freed time for planning and collaboration. A related model calls for a **Time Swap** without technology, replacing digital instruction time with time for offline skills practice and projects.

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