SEIZING OPPORTUNITY AT THE TOP II

STATE POLICIES TO REACH EVERY STUDENT WITH EXCELLENT TEACHING

BY PUBLIC IMPACT

What can policymakers do to ensure that every student has consistent access to excellent teaching? In this brief, Public Impact details the policies that states and districts need.

Research continues to confirm that without excellent teaching consistently, most students who start behind stay behind, and too few middling and advanced students leap ahead. Even hardworking, solid teachers who achieve one year of learning progress leave achievement gaps intact. Schools that consistently provide all students with excellent teachers—those in today's top 20 to 25 percent who achieve well over one year of learning progress—can close most gaps fast. But most schools provide students with teaching at this level in only one of four classrooms.

Rigorous recruitment, development, and retention, plus necessary dismissals will improve teaching. Nations making education surges have limited who can teach to their top high school or college students who also exhibit other qualities needed for great teaching. U.S. states should follow their lead. But this alone would not be adequate in our economy, absent paid career advancement that both makes the teaching profession attractive to more top candidates and allows rapid on-the-job development for all.

Yet most teachers today work alone. Excellent teachers rarely have authority, time, or sustainably higher pay to lead while teaching. Solid teachers are on their own, with few chances to learn on the job from excellent peers.

To ensure that every student has access to excellent teaching consistently, states and districts must also help excellent teachers extend their reach to far more students, directly and by leading teaching teams, and earn far more, within budget. "Reach extension" also creates new roles and in-school time for all teachers to learn on the job from the best, contribute to excellence immediately, improve, and pursue career advancement. Altogether, this creates an "Opportunity Culture" for students *and* teachers.

What Policy Leaders Can Do

First, state and district leaders must commit to reaching every student with excellent teaching consistently. Second, this brief provides policies that state leaders can use to enable an Opportunity Culture statewide, in five categories:

- **Identifying and Developing Teaching Excellence**
- **Flexibility to Staff Schools**
- **Flexibility for Instructional Delivery**
- **Accountability and Feedback for Results**
- **Rewarding and Retaining Excellent Teachers**

Policies are marked either as ⓘ **urgent,** because they are urgently needed to support pilot districts or schools, or ⊕ **optimal,** to support successful scale-up across a state. States should allow waivers for pilots when lasting policy change cannot be made fast enough. **Far more students can experience the consistently excellent teaching needed to close achievement gaps and leap ahead to advanced work.**

The table on the following page summarizes the policies needed, and the remainder of the brief provides detail for those crafting new policies. A **checklist version** of this brief is available on **OpportunityCulture.org.**

This updates our earlier working paper *Seizing Opportunity at the Top*, **based on experience collaborating with several districts and hundreds of teachers and administrators, and analysis of their states' policies.** Getting these policies right is especially important to the outstanding and committed teachers in schools implementing Opportunity Culture models, and to the students they serve.

This brief is written for an audience already familiar with the five Opportunity Culture Principles and related terms. See **OpportunityCulture.org** for more about **school models, career paths,** and **paying teachers more** while letting teachers reach more students with excellence and increasing time for planning, collaboration, and on-the-job learning.

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**

At-A-Glance: Urgent and Optimal State Policies for an Opportunity Culture

The table below lists state policies that are **urgent** for Opportunity Culture pilot and expansion efforts, and policies that **optimize** Opportunity Culture implementation over time. The **"Urgent Policies"** column lists the policy needs that are critical for pilot schools to design and implement Opportunity Culture models, and these should receive immediate attention from policy leaders. The **"Optimal Policies"** column lists policies that will increase the effectiveness and prevalence of Opportunity Culture models and make the best use of state funds. These should receive attention in any state ready to scale up an Opportunity Culture within and across multiple districts.

	Urgent Policies	Optimal Policies
Identifying and Developing Teaching Excellence	ⓘ All teachers receive an annual evaluation that includes student growth, or a proxy measure, and includes multiple measures correlated with student learning. ⓘ States can identify approximately the top quartile of teachers. ⓘ Evaluations match the responsibilities of each teacher, including the outcomes of students and subjects for which each teacher is responsible. (See Accountability section below for state documentation of student learning that feeds into evaluations.)	⊕ Teachers' evaluations include behavioral competencies that correlate with student learning outcomes in tested subjects. ⊕ Evaluations include a "reach measure" of the number of students for whom each teacher is formally accountable compared with a standard, one-teacher-one-classroom teaching role. ⊕ State evaluations help teachers improve and advance as professionals in common Opportunity Culture career paths.
Flexibility to Staff Schools	ⓘ State funding is fungible across budget categories, allowing districts and schools to trade or combine positions, technology, and other funds at the budgeted level as needed to pay for and support advanced roles.	⊕ Excellent out-of-state teachers are automatically eligible to teach. ⊕ Budget transfer administration costs and time are eliminated by funding schools in lump sums, based on the weighted costs of educating students with differing characteristics in each school.
Flexibility for Instructional Delivery	ⓘ When a highly effective teacher is willingly accountable for each student's learning, restrictions are waived or eliminated to prevent extended-reach teaching models from being hampered by: • class-size limits • "seat time" requirements that limit where or with whom a student learns • "line of sight" requirements. ⓘ Districts can reallocate categorical funds to implement blended and online learning, if a teacher is accountable for each student's learning.	⊕ State data systems provide sufficient detail on student learning progress to enable personalized instructional levels and interventions during the year. ⊕ State procurement policies are streamlined to help districts implement blended and online learning. ⊕ State supports temporary transition costs to provide universal wireless broadband access.
Accountability and Feedback for Results	ⓘ State uses a student growth model, or proxy measures, for subjects in which teachers will extend their reach. ⓘ Formal accountability tracked by the state matches the students and subjects for which each teacher, team teacher, and team leader is responsible.	⊕ The state formally tracks and reports behavioral competency ratings and other soft measures that correlate with success in new teaching roles. ⊕ The state tracks and reports the percentage of students in each core subject and grade, overall and by student subgroup, with excellent teachers accountable for student learning.
Rewarding and Retaining Excellent Teachers	ⓘ Statewide salary scales allow districts and schools to create new roles and pay excellent and effective teachers more for reaching more students. ⓘ The state funds or co-funds temporary transition costs for pilot districts and schools to establish new staffing models that reach at least 75 percent of students in core subjects with excellent teachers, for more pay, within budget.	⊕ The state funds or co-funds temporary transition costs for all districts and schools to establish new staffing models that reach at least 75 percent of students with excellent teachers in core subjects, for more pay, within budget. States taking the strongest approach will require all districts to implement and will include teachers of more subjects. ⊕ State funding allocation helps districts reward excellent teachers for taking hard-to-staff positions, such as STEM teaching in any school or positions in high-poverty schools, in addition to extending their reach. ⊕ State salary scales include default career paths and criteria that districts may adopt to pay more for roles that extend teachers' reach, directly and by leading peers. ⊕ Consistently excellent teachers earn "elite tenure," including protection during layoffs and the ability to help choose their peers.

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING TEACHING EXCELLENCE

	Urgent Policies	Optimal Policies
Identifying and Developing Teaching Excellence	ⓘ All teachers receive an annual evaluation that includes student growth, or a proxy measure, and includes multiple measures correlated with student learning. ⓘ States can identify approximately the top quartile of teachers. ⓘ Evaluations match the responsibilities of each teacher, including the outcomes of students and subjects for which each teacher is responsible. (See Accountability section below for state documentation of student learning that feeds into evaluations.)	⊕ Teachers' evaluations include behavioral competencies that correlate with student learning outcomes in tested subjects. ⊕ Evaluations include a "reach measure" of the number of students for whom each teacher is formally accountable compared with a standard, one-teacher-one-classroom teaching role. ⊕ State evaluations help teachers improve and advance as professionals in common Opportunity Culture career paths.

To extend the reach of top teachers, evaluation systems must first identify them based on the criteria that matter most. Teachers also need a feedback and development loop that analyzes their performance and guides their job-embedded professional development.

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***All teachers receive an annual evaluation that includes student growth, or a proxy measure, and includes multiple measures correlated with student learning.***

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***States can identify approximately the top quartile of teachers.***

Schools must be able to identify the teachers whom they want reaching more students. Ideally, evaluation systems will generate a student growth score that allows districts to identify teachers who achieve high levels of growth with their students. Even when identification of the least effective teachers is contentious, the state should still be able to identify a large portion of teachers at the top for the purpose of providing highly paid advancement opportunities. If student growth scores are not generated, this determination will need to be drawn from multiple measures that correlate with student growth in tested subjects and can then be used to identify the top 25 percent of teachers in other, related subjects and grades. The 25 percent marker serves as a proxy for actual growth measures—on average, top-quartile teachers achieve 1.5 years of student growth, enough to close most achievement gaps over two to four years and induce leaps to honors-level work. The top 25 percent is thus the suggested demarcation, but states may vary this based on the data available in their evaluation systems. In untested grades and subjects, other validated measures of student learning must be used.

In some places where talent is especially scarce, the goal will be to extend the reach of the best available teachers. The exact cutoff is less important than the commitment to pursue high-growth learning and to reach far more students with the teachers who are most successful inducing it, along with higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. This is critical for providing teachers with career opportunities that also improve student learning.

The research base on weighting value-added measures within this component of an evaluation model is still emerging.[1] Thus, states should pursue improvements in measurement.

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***Evaluations match the responsibilities of each teacher, including the outcomes of students and subjects for which each teacher is responsible.***

See **Accountability** section below for state documentation of student learning that feeds into evaluations.

Opportunity Culture roles vary both from one another and from traditional one-teacher-one-classroom roles. In most models, teachers are jointly responsible for students and work in teams, particularly at the elementary level. They may divide responsibilities by subject and teaching mode, such as small-group interventions, large-group teaching, or individual follow-up. In both elementary and secondary models, team leaders called multi-classroom leaders (MCLs) are responsible for all the students in their teaching "pods," even though they may directly teach only a portion of these students (e.g., in small-group interventions or in some subjects and sub-subjects). All Opportunity Culture teachers, whether or not they work on teams, extend their reach or support their team teachers' reach to more than the usual number of students.

In all cases, teachers need their formal evaluations to reflect the learning data of the students and subjects for which they are responsible in their daily work, even when responsibility is shared.

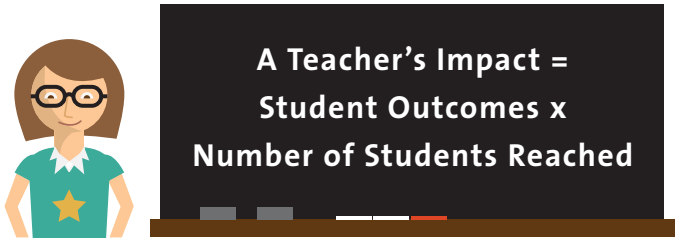
We must commit to pursuing high-growth learning and to reaching far more students with the teachers who are most successful inducing it.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***Teachers' evaluations include behavioral competencies that correlate with student learning outcomes in tested subjects.***

The teacher evaluation system becomes a stronger tool for identifying excellent teachers when it includes behavioral competencies that statistically distinguish top teachers from others. Behavioral competencies are likely the next frontier of teacher evaluation in the U.S.; states can look to Singapore as an example of successful implementation of a behavioral competency-based system.[2]

⊕ **Optimal:** ***Evaluations include a "reach measure" of the number of students for whom each teacher is formally accountable compared with a standard, one-teacher-one-classroom teaching role.***

Our formula: A teacher's impact = effectiveness X the number of students reached. Evaluations today focus only on the first part of the formula and not on the magnitude of impact, or "reach." Teachers who teach 15 students brilliantly are making a terrific contribution to those children. But one who teaches brilliantly *and* extends her reach directly or by leading peers with full accountability for her students' learning is contributing more and having a greater impact. Reporting reach as a percentage of the average one-teacher-one-classroom reach will show teachers this other, critical aspect of their contribution to students, the school, and their communities. For example, an elementary teacher with a class of 16 students is teaching about 80 percent of the average student load of 20, and might have a "reach score" of .8. One extending reach on a Time-Technology Swap team, without increasing class sizes, reaches approximately 133 percent of the average student load and would have a reach score of 1.33. Showing that reach score multiplied by that teacher's effectiveness rating emphasizes for teachers that one way of improving and advancing their careers is to help more students successfully, which requires better planning, teamwork, leadership, and related skills.



In an Opportunity Culture, professional development becomes a job-embedded activity that occurs daily.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***State evaluations help teachers improve and advance as professionals in common Opportunity Culture career paths.***

In an Opportunity Culture, professional development becomes a job-embedded activity that occurs daily. All teachers have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, and are led by instructional experts who can help them advance toward excellence. This cannot be achieved by accident—teacher evaluation results must clearly highlight areas of strength and improvement, and either school or multi-classroom leaders will need to work with teachers all year to develop their knowledge base, coach them in analysis of student data, and give them feedback as they practice new skills. State evaluation systems should be designed not just to generate annual ratings, but to provide clear feedback throughout the year that teachers can immediately use to improve their practice. States can also revise re-licensure policies that focus on obtaining continuing education credits by expanding qualifying activities to include analysis of student data; efforts to implement, evaluate, and improve an instructional strategy; or the study of area in which they need to deepen their knowledge.[3]

FLEXIBILITY TO STAFF SCHOOLS

	Urgent Policies	Optimal Policies
Flexibility to Staff Schools	ⓘ State funding is fungible across budget categories, allowing districts and schools to trade or combine positions, technology, and other funds at the budgeted level as needed to pay for and support advanced roles.	⊕ Excellent out-of-state teachers are automatically eligible to teach. ⊕ Budget transfer administration costs and time are eliminated by funding schools in lump sums, based on the weighted costs of educating students with differing characteristics in each school.

State policies and funding mechanisms might unintentionally limit efforts to establish and pay for positions that extend the reach of excellent teachers. If the state wants schools to maximize student outcomes within current budgets, local educators will need flexibility to use state investments in new ways.

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***State funding is fungible across budget categories, allowing districts and schools to trade or combine positions, technology, and other funds at the budgeted level as needed to pay for and support advanced roles.***

To achieve an Opportunity Culture, districts and schools must formulate a staffing structure that maximizes the reach of excellent teachers by regrouping students and teaching teams and making strategic use of technology. This work is greatly hampered and could be impossible if states impose unnecessary restraints on budget line items, or rules that prevent or penalize reallocation of state dollars. Of course, such limitations were put in place for a purpose, and many state leaders will not be comfortable giving all districts complete flexibility to use funds at their own discretion. In these cases, states can waive restrictions on districts in exchange for increasing the percentage of students with excellent teachers accountable for their learning in designated subjects.

To grant this flexibility, states should move from budgets that fund specific line items or staff positions to systems that fund students based on their needs. If full student-based funding is not feasible, states can provide a mechanism for districts to exchange positions or other line items for fungible dollars that they can use to pay teachers more, hire paraprofessionals, or purchase technology. Under such exchanges, states must avoid penalizing districts for reallocating dollars (such as making the teacher salary cash-in amount revert to the beginner-teacher level rather than average teacher salary). Otherwise, districts will either have to reduce pay supplement amounts or limit the number of advanced roles and the number of students reached with great teachers.

> Opportunity Culture-style staffing could be impossible if states impose unnecessary restraints on budget line items or hamper reallocation of state dollars.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***Excellent out-of-state teachers are automatically eligible to teach.***

Excellent teachers who have achieved an average of 1.5 years of student growth will ideally not be withheld from the state's students due to licensure barriers. Particularly in states that now share English language arts and mathematics standards, excellent out-of-state teachers should be eligible to apply for reach positions. Early recruiting results indicate that the first states to adopt this policy will become talent magnets for top teachers.[4]

⊕ **Optimal:** ***Budget transfer administration costs and time are eliminated by funding schools in lump sums, based on the weighted costs of educating students with differing characteristics in each school.***

When a state is ready to scale up new school models across the state, it will considerably reduce administrative costs by switching to a student-based funding system. Funding based on positions or other methods that presume one-teacher-one-classroom force both district- and state-level administrators to process paperwork for position exchanges to fund higher teacher pay and paraprofessional support. When many schools are using alternative models, this administrative burden does not benefit students or the public, and in fact may inhibit some districts with less central staff support from innovating. Funds for these administrative costs would be better spent on the temporary costs of transitioning to an Opportunity Culture or other investments that support great teaching.

When states transition to student-based budgeting,[5] they should incorporate weighted funding to provide the level of financial resources needed to educate students with differing needs. Weighting for poverty and special needs are two obvious examples.

FLEXIBILITY FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

	Urgent Policies	Optimal Policies
Flexibility for Instructional Delivery	ⓘ When a highly effective teacher is willingly accountable for each student's learning, restrictions are waived or eliminated to prevent extended-reach teaching models from being hampered by: • class-size limits • "seat time" requirements that limit where or with whom a student learns • "line of sight" requirements. ⓘ Districts can reallocate categorical funds to implement blended and online learning, if a teacher is accountable for each student's learning.	⊕ State data systems provide sufficient detail on student learning progress to enable personalized instructional levels and interventions during the year. ⊕ State procurement policies are streamlined to help districts implement blended and online learning. ⊕ State supports temporary transition costs to provide universal wireless broadband access.

Policies in this area have big implications for staffing redesign within schools. Schools differ in their teaching excellence, student needs, funding levels, facilities, technology, and other factors. To give an Opportunity Culture redesign the best foundation for success in varying contexts, state policies should ensure that schools can make changes as needed in these elements of school design, so they can use any of the Opportunity Culture **school models** and combinations that best fit each school.

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***When a highly effective teacher is willingly accountable for student learning, restrictions are waived or eliminated to prevent extended-reach teaching models from being hampered by class-size limits or line of sight and seat time requirements.***

Teachers in Opportunity Culture models use the assistance of paraprofessionals to oversee digital learning and skills practice. This allows a smaller, elite team of teachers to reach more students, for more pay, without increasing the number of students with a teacher at a given time. Paraprofessional coverage also provides a teaching team with time together during the school day to plan instruction, review student progress, and learn on the job. Such staffing innovations are difficult when state policy limits options for grouping students and sets restrictions on what is considered creditable learning time. When a highly effective teacher is accountable for each student's learning in each core subject, and that teacher must maintain that track record, states can loosen restrictions on class size, line of sight and seat time.

Class-size laws rest on the antiquated assumption that teachers work alone rather than in teams with teacher-leaders and paraprofessionals. But bluntly eliminating class-size limits leaves students and teachers at risk. States and districts should let teachers choose to reach more students, *if* a highly effective teacher (or teacher-leader) is accountable for student learning in the affected subjects. This allows time swaps that yield the funding for higher pay and in-school planning time for extended-reach teachers.

Line of sight policies requiring students to be under the eye of a certified teacher during all instructional time hamper innovative staffing designs that would use paraprofessionals to oversee skills practice and digital learning. States should remove this restriction when a highly effective teacher (or teacher-leader) is accountable for students in the affected subject.

Seat time requirements impede staffing redesign by dictating the number of hours a student must spend with a licensed teacher in order to earn academic credit. As with light of sight rules, this prevents paraprofessional support that allows teachers to plan and collaborate at work. States should shift to a competency-based model that awards students credit for demonstrating mastery—but only for any school or district in which at least 75 percent of students have highly effective teachers accountable for learning in the four core subjects, at a minimum.

Many states are opening the door to competency-based learning by establishing policies that award credit to students who demonstrate prescribed levels of knowledge and skills.[6] However, changes to policies on class size, line of sight, and seat time often trigger concern that districts will ease budget pressures by allowing class sizes to mushroom unchecked and by putting untrained staff at the helm of instruction. By requiring a highly effective teacher to be accountable for student learning, states can pair digital innovation with a focus on teaching quality and student outcomes.[7]

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***Districts can reallocate categorical funds to implement blended and online learning, if a teacher is accountable for each student's learning.***

The state should enable digital learning investments by ensuring that categorical funds can be reallocated for technology hardware, software, Internet service, and technology-enabling facilities changes. In some locations—those with limited technology—the freedom to reallocate funds to purchase digital learning tools is urgent.

Many schools find that technology is needed to free multi-classroom leaders, team teachers, and blended-learning teachers for the collaborative planning time and innovative scheduling that is essential to an Opportunity Culture. Blended and fully online, teacher-supervised learning both require universal student access to wireless broadband at recommended speeds, which may require new investment.[8] Districts also need to acquire necessary hardware and software. Some schools will need to invest in facilities modifications, adding electrical capacity for computers and eliminating walls or installing glass doors and windows between some rooms.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***State data systems provide sufficient detail on student learning progress to enable personalized instructional levels and interventions during the year.***

In an Opportunity Culture, schools and top educators need data at their fingertips to make frequent, strategic scheduling and instructional decisions based on an analysis of student learning. Sudden slowdowns in learning, prolonged plateaus when others are advancing, and learning leaps should trigger changes in instruction. States across the nation have made significant progress in establishing longitudinal data systems, but these systems are not sufficient for day-to-day monitoring and adjustments in response to each student's progress. Current assessment and data systems tend to produce a hodgepodge of interim data that is not comparable across schools and districts. Despite proliferating digital resources, teaching-team leaders do not have ready access to data that lets them compare their teams' student outcomes to other comparable teams. A teacher's access to high-value interim data is essential if great teachers are to personalize instruction for a *larger number of students* and to lead a team of teachers.

States can establish a single sign-on portal that is capable of incorporating results from various digital instructional resources and allows teachers to enter other pertinent data for an analysis of student work. This relieves local districts and educators of the burden of piecing together information from a variety of sources, allowing them to focus on acquiring and analyzing student data to make strategic decisions about instruction and staffing.[12] It also gives teacher-leaders, principals, and districts comparative data for similar students and the teachers responsible for them. This in turn would inform not only stronger instructional approaches, but also the developmental needs of individual teachers and teams.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***State procurement policies are streamlined to help districts implement blended and online learning.***

Before scale-up, states should identify cumbersome or restrictive procurement policies that could be improved or waived for purchases that improve the effectiveness, efficiency, or economy of instruction, including digital learning tools.[9] State procurement policies should also provide districts with the flexibility to change vendors as needed, rather than having to wait for the next approval cycle to make a change.

The state might take on the role of amassing vendor products and services, categorizing and evaluating fit with state content standards, featuring reviews to inform local decision making, and using a vendor pre-approval process to streamline procurement processes.[10] The state could also establish investment pools that help districts achieve greater purchasing power, easing some of the financial burden associated with a shift to blended learning.

Or, to avoid the extremes of rushing to buy technology without matching it to new job models or being unable to afford the technology changes that would enable models such as Time-Technology Swaps, the state could even lend Opportunity Culture districts digital-learning funds at a low interest rate to spread the costs of implementation over the anticipated life of the products. [11]

⊕ **Optimal:** ***State supports temporary transition costs to provide universal wireless broadband access.***

In the digital information age, students without wireless broadband access will not have the best information for learning, and teachers will not have access to the best instructional tools and data. States ready to scale up an Opportunity Culture can reinvest the savings from administrative costs to ensure that all schools have universal wireless broadband access.

HOW CLASS-SIZE LIMITS BLOCK TEAMWORK AND ACCESS TO GREAT TEACHERS

Example: The state limits student-teacher ratios to 21:1 in third grade, with no class above 24 students.

How this blocks teamwork and reach extension: Consider a school seeking to establish the multi-classroom leadership model for 84 students in third grade. They plan to continually regroup students according to individuals' needs using one multi-classroom leader (who also teaches), two effective classroom teachers, at least three paraprofessionals, and a digital learning lab. The teachers will have two hours daily at school to collaborate and improve instructional differentiation together. They will earn 3 percent to 50 percent more, within budget. No more than 21 students will ever be in a classroom at the same time with a teacher. Under state law, they are unable to do this model without "fudging" their reporting to the state, because: a) the ratio of students to certified teachers would be 28:1, and b) during a portion of the day, students would be in the digital lab overseen by a paraprofessional and out of the certified teacher's line of sight.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND FEEDBACK FOR RESULTS

	Urgent Policies	Optimal Policies
Accountability and Feedback for Results	ⓘ State uses a student growth model, or proxy measures, for subjects in which teachers will extend their reach. ⓘ Formal accountability tracked by the state matches the students and subjects for which each teacher, team teacher, and team leader is responsible.	⊕ The state formally tracks and reports behavioral competency ratings and other soft measures that correlate with success in new teaching roles. ⊕ The state tracks and reports the percentage of students in each core subject and grade, overall and by student subgroup, with excellent teachers accountable for student learning.

Opportunity Culture schools match authority and accountability to each person's responsibilities. State accountability policy must enable local districts to adhere to this principle. Accountability can also be used to signal the state's commitment to giving all students access to excellent teachers and to gauge progress toward achieving that goal.

ⓘ Urgent: ***State uses a student growth model, or proxy measures, for subjects in which teachers will extend their reach.***

Growth measures are important for students, because more than a year's worth of growth is essential to close achievement gaps and to help "average" students then leap to advanced work. Growth measures are also important to teachers, because achieving high growth with some consistency opens the door to highly paid career advancement in an Opportunity Culture, and the chance to expand a teacher's impact to far more students and to teaching peers. States must use and continue to improve measures of how much learning progress, or "growth," students make in a year's time. Subjects in which growth measures have not been adopted will need proxy measures; ideally, these proxy measurement methods will correlate highly with outcomes in subjects where growth is also measured.

ⓘ Urgent: ***Formal accountability tracked by the state matches the students and subjects for which each teacher, team teacher, and team leader is responsible.***

Formal tracking of student growth must match each teacher's actual responsibilities as closely as is feasible. For example, student growth measures must allow for attributing more than the typical student load to a teacher, and in elementary school match only to the subjects or sub-subjects that each teacher teaches (this is already the case at the secondary level).

Growth measures also must allow for shared attribution. "Shared attribution" means holding multiple teachers accountable—and giving them all credit—for a student's learning. The state will need to establish a formal roster verification process in which individual students are reviewed and assigned at the local level, reflecting the amount of each teacher's contribution for a grade level or subject area.[13] The state will also need to ensure that any growth model used allows for shared attribution.

In growth models such as EVAAS, shared attribution is possible as long as the total percentage of instruction claimed for each student does not exceed 100. This is an appropriate strategy for technical allocation of accountability across some teams of teachers—for example, when accountability is divided by subject. However, in fact and spirit, some teaching roles are fully accountable for student learning *even when other teachers are also fully accountable*.

Multi-classroom leaders, for example, spend only a portion of their time directly instructing students. A great deal of their contribution to student learning comes through data analysis, carefully orchestrating regrouping of students to meet individual needs, and helping the teachers they oversee improve their instructional effectiveness. Calculating the contribution of a multi-classroom leader should not be based only on the percentage of time spent directly instructing students—the calculation must also account for the full range of students that a multi-classroom leader oversees.

In another example, a teaching team at the elementary level might divide responsibilities not by subject but by role—small-group, large-group, and one-on-one instruction. The teachers are in fact each 100 percent responsible for the students' outcomes across subjects, and the accountability measuring and reporting system should match that.

⊕ Optimal: ***The state formally tracks and reports behavioral competency ratings and other soft measures that correlate with success in new teaching roles.***

Districts will need to evaluate teachers in new roles to identify who is succeeding and areas for improvement. To be meaningful, evaluations of a teacher's effectiveness and development needs should be based on role-specific practices that correlate with student achievement. For multi-classroom leaders, the evaluation should include effective peer coaching and team leadership practices. For teachers who incorporate digital learning, the evaluation should include practices essential for blended learning. But adding or altering elements within a teacher evaluation system can be controversial and take significant time. States can support dis-

tricts by identifying measures likely to be relevant for new teaching roles. At a minimum, state policy must allow districts to add on to any state-approved evaluation system—early pilot schools have taken this approach. But this is not ideal, since such additions will nullify validity of the instrument, requiring an effort to reassess validity with the new measures in place. The state can help by funding technical validation to ensure that measures work as intended for new roles.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***The state tracks and reports the percentage of students in each core subject and grade, overall and by student subgroup, with excellent teachers accountable for student learning.***

States committed to reaching far more students with excellent teaching must eventually require LEAs to report a) the percentage of students whose teacher of record is highly effective by district and school, at least for each core subject, and b) the proportion of students in various subgroups who have teachers at each level of effectiveness (as determined by the approved teacher evaluation instrument). Note that in states where local districts each design their own evaluation system, it will be difficult to establish a sense of teacher effectiveness across the state.[14] States could set goals for reach extension that increase over time, such as challenging districts to ensure that 75 percent of students experience instruction led by excellent teachers in all four core subjects, at a minimum, within five years.

REWARDING AND RETAINING EXCELLENT TEACHERS

In addition to reaching more students with excellent teaching, an intended benefit of Opportunity Culture models is to reward and retain teachers who achieve consistent excellence. Early-mover states will benefit from the reputational effects of their leadership and will attract top-notch teachers nationally. Pilot schools thus far have received applications for Opportunity Culture positions from excellent teachers all over the U.S., and multi-classroom leaders have made public statements that without the new career paths they would have left the classroom for administration or another occupation.

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***Statewide salary scales allow districts and schools to create new roles and pay excellent teachers more for reaching more students*****.**

Most state salary schedules are built on years of experience ("steps") and degrees earned ("lanes"). The state will need to either modify the current schedule to incorporate reach-extension roles (such as team leaders, direct-reach teachers, and remotely located instructors) or will need to allow districts to establish roles and salary structures that differ from the state's guidelines. In states that allocate position-based dollars, districts will need full flexibility to reallocate those funds as needed for personnel, regardless of where they fall on the state salary schedule.

ⓘ **Urgent:** ***The state funds or co-funds temporary, transition costs for*** **pilot** ***districts and schools to establish new staffing models that reach at least 75 percent of students in core subjects with excellent teachers, for more pay, within budget.***

To establish an Opportunity Culture, districts and schools must make strategic decisions about the use of current resources and will need thoughtful leadership to implement the culture shift. States can fund associated transition costs, offering districts temporary technical assistance to facilitate the planning and transition process, analyze resources to determine which funds to reallocate, and calculate the range of stipends that can be sustainably

	Urgent Policies	Optimal Policies
Rewarding and Retaining Excellent Teachers	ⓘ Statewide salary scales allow districts and schools to create new roles and pay excellent and effective teachers more for reaching more students. ⓘ The state funds or co-funds temporary transition costs for pilot districts and schools to establish new staffing models that reach at least 75 percent of students in core subjects with excellent teachers, for more pay, within budget.	⊕ The state funds or co-funds temporary transition costs for all districts and schools to establish new staffing models that reach at least 75 percent of students with excellent teachers in core subjects, for more pay, within budget. States taking the strongest approach will require all districts to implement and will include teachers of more subjects. ⊕ State funding allocation helps districts reward excellent teachers for taking hard-to-staff positions, such as STEM teaching in any school or positions in high-poverty schools, in addition to extending their reach. ⊕ State salary scales include default career paths and criteria that districts may adopt to pay more for roles that extend teachers' reach, directly and by leading peers. ⊕ Consistently excellent teachers earn "elite tenure," including protection during layoffs and the ability to help choose their peers.

offered for new roles. An increasing number of free tools are available to help districts navigate these changes on their own and reduce transition costs. In the near term, most districts will need resources to pay for outside help or staff to facilitate school-level design decisions and to redesign compensation, career paths, selection, and budgeting, at a minimum.

States can ensure the best use of transition funding by requiring funded districts to meet design thresholds, such as reaching three-fourths of students with highly effective teachers within a certain time period. They may also set other parameters aligned with the Opportunity Culture Principles as conditions for receiving transition funding, such as specifying minimum pay supplements and in-school time for teachers to plan instruction.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***The state funds or co-funds temporary transition costs for*** **all** ***districts and schools to establish new staffing models that reach at least 75 percent of students with excellent teachers in core subjects, for more pay, within budget.*** *States taking the strongest approach will require all districts to implement and will include teachers of more subjects.*

States will need to fund or co-fund the temporary costs of reaching scale in pilot districts and transitioning additional districts to an Opportunity Culture. A state can fund these costs fully or require matching by the district, allowing districts to use a combination of public and private funding sources to achieve the match.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***State funding allocation helps districts reward excellent teachers for taking hard-to-staff positions****, such as STEM teaching in any school or positions in high-poverty schools.*

States can encourage excellent teachers to work in high-poverty schools and to remain as math and science teachers, rather than abandoning the classroom to take higher-paying jobs. The state can offer stipends to teachers who consistently achieve greater-than-expected growth with students in challenging, high-poverty settings or in subject areas that face a teacher shortage. This state funding will address priorities that exist with or without reach extension, allowing districts to add on pay for new reach roles. This combination of state and district stipends means high-flying teachers who excel in hard-to-staff positions have the potential to receive the greatest compensation, aligning the system of professional rewards with the state's most challenging staffing needs.

> State leaders are in a unique position to implement policy changes that flip the odds for students, allowing nearly all to have excellent teaching every year.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***State salary scales include default career paths and criteria that districts may adopt to pay more for roles that extend teachers' reach, directly and by leading peers.***

States can make the transition to an Opportunity Culture easier and cheaper for a larger number of districts by providing a default set of career paths, with minimum compensation supplements achievable in any school. Any state *mandating* a transition to new career paths that extend teachers' reach for more pay, within budget, will need to provide this guidance. In the coming years, states will have the benefit of many previous examples to consider in establishing these defaults, from relatively flat paths that reward all reach roles similarly to highly differentiated paths that recognize levels of teaching excellence, reach, leadership, and experience in extended-reach roles.

⊕ **Optimal:** ***Consistently excellent teachers earn "elite tenure," including absolute protection during layoffs and the ability to help choose their peers.***

States have limited power to change tenure for teachers who already hold it, but a new status of elite tenure could be established for teachers who have proven their mettle through student outcomes.[15] Schools cannot afford to lose teachers who consistently achieve greater-than-expected student results. States can establish elite tenure to ensure that top-performing teachers are protected from last in, first out policies during tight budget times. Elite tenure could also give the profession's most effective teachers a role in making decisions on hiring, tenure, and teaching assignments by analyzing the results and potential of their peers.

CONCLUSION

Districts making the transition to an Opportunity Culture will find some policy barriers in nearly every state. Most policies were built for a one-teacher-one-classroom mode that presumes the great majority of students will not have an excellent teacher each year. In their current form, many policies limit the reach, pay, financial sustainability, in-school time for planning and collaboration, and accountability of excellent teachers and teams wanting to help more students.

State leaders are in a unique position to change this—to implement policy changes that flip the odds for students so that nearly every student has excellent teaching every year. This brief enables ambitious state leaders to make the right policy changes fast, and then to optimize policies for scale, ultimately providing an Opportunity Culture for all—students *and* teachers.

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BUILDING AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE FOR AMERICA'S TEACHERS

PUBLIC IMPACT

Notes

1. Most recently, in January 2013 the Measures of Effective Teaching study recommended that states use one of two weighting distributions for student achievement—including value-added growth and other measures, classroom observations, and student surveys. The options were: A) Give each evaluation component equal weight, or B) Give student achievement 50 percent weight with classroom observations and student surveys each comprising 25 percent of the evaluation. See: Cantrell, S. and Kane, T. J. (2013). *Ensuring fair and reliable measures of effective teaching: Culminating findings from the MET Project's three-year study.* Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reliable_Measures_Practitioner_Brief.pdf

2. Steiner, L. (2010). *Using competency-based evaluation to drive teacher excellence: Lessons from Singapore.* Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact. Retrieved from http://opportunityculture.org/singapore-lessons/; Hassel, E. A., & Hassel, B. C. (2011). *Seizing opportunity at the top.* Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact.

3. The Center for Great Teachers and Leaders has described possible sources of evidence that teachers are engaged in professional learning. See: Coggshall, J. D., Rasmussen, C., Colton, A., Milton, J., & Jacques, C. (2012). *Generating teaching effectiveness: The role of job-embedded professional learning in teacher evaluation.* Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Retrieved from http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/GeneratingTeachingEffectiveness.pdf

4. For a description of the results achieved in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, see Public Impact's 2013 case study, *Charlotte, N.C.'s Project L.I.F.T: New teaching roles create culture of excellence in high-need schools,* at http://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Charlotte_N.C._Project_L.I.F.T._An_Opportunity_Culture_Case_Study-Public_Impact.pdf

5. For information on student-based budgeting, see: Bailey, J., Schneider, C., & Vander Ark, T. (2013, April). *Funding students, options, and achievement.* Digital Learning Now! Retrieved from http://digitallearningnow.com/site/uploads/2013/04/Funding-Paper-Final1.pdf; see also Public Impact's funding resources, including several briefs on student-based budgeting, at http://publicimpact.com/category/school-funding/

6. NCSL reviewed new policies in several states that have moved away from seat time. See: *Rethinking "seat time:" State approaches to earning credit in out-of school time.* National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/SeatTime.pdf

7. Policies requiring a highly effective teacher in charge would need built-in flexibility to enable schools to handle within-year changes in their teaching staffs without having to completely reorganize class assignments and schedules.

8. Though connections are deemed "high speed" at 3 Mbps, the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) recommends that schools have a least 100 Mbps per 1,000 students/staff members, increasing to speeds of 1 Gbps per 1,000 students/staff by the 2017–18 school year.

9. For an overview of steps a state can take to modernize procurement policies, see: Bailey, J., Owens, D., Schneider, C., Vander Ark, T., & Waldron, R. (2014, January). *Smart series guide to edtech procurement.* Digital Learning Now! Retrieved from http://digitallearningnow.com/site/uploads/2014/01/Procurement-Paper-Final-Version.pdf

10. For an example of state activity in this area, see the Florida Virtual Curriculum Marketplace, which is operated through a contract with Learning.com, at http://www.fldoe.org/bii/Instruct_Mat/fvcm.asp

11. For example, see the School Technology Revolving Loan Program in Illinois, which is authorized in state code to administer loans of up to three-year periods with interests rates set at no more than half of average municipal bond yields. The program offers districts a three-year loan with a 2 percent interest rate. Since the program began in FY 1999, 589 loans—more than $83 million—have been made to school districts. See http://www.isbe.net/ed-technology/html/revolving_loan.htm

12. For an example of a state offering this support to districts, see North Carolina's new Home Base instructional improvement system. The system integrates data from the learning management system and a student information system. The learning management system pulls data from a variety of formative assessment instruments implemented statewide, such as the Reading 3D/mCLASS instrument that uses handheld devices to collect real-time information about student reading skills.

13. he Data Quality Campaign offers states guidance on establishing a strong teacher-student data link. See *Roadmap for a teacher-student data link* at http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/DQC%20roadmap%20TSDL.pdf

14. In 2012, the Center for Public Education found that 13 states mandate use of a state-approved teacher evaluation system with little flexibility, 17 states provide a model evaluation system that districts can either adopt or districts can develop their own system meeting state criteria, and 21 states require each district to design their own evaluation system that meets state approval. See: Hull, J. (2013, October). *Trends in teacher evaluation.* Alexandria, VA: Center for Public Education. Retrieved from http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Evaluating-performance/Trends-in-Teacher-Evaluation-At-A-Glance/Trends-in-Teacher-Evaluation-Full-Report-PDF.pdf

15. Public Impact. (2011). *Teacher tenure reform: Applying lesson from the civil service and higher education.* Chapel Hill, NC: Author. Retrieved from http://opportunityculture.org/teacher-tenure-reform/. A discussion of "elite tenure" and an example of its design can be found on page 15 and in Table 3.