

Opportunity Anew

How Excellent Educators
Can Lift Up Their Colleagues,
Students, and the Nation
in the Wake of Covid-19

BY PUBLIC IMPACT

Read This if You Want To:

- ✓ Make high-growth learning the “new average”
- ✓ Help underserved students excel—fast
- ✓ Save teachers time
- ✓ Pay student teachers well
- ✓ Provide tutoring permanently
- ✓ Restore joy and hope in schools
- ✓ Pay everyone more—within budget



In the wake of Covid-19, the U.S. pre-K–12 education system needs more than a refresh. We need to **think anew**.

Based on the success and popularity of the Opportunity Culture model, in this brief Public Impact recommends the means to bring critical, effective instructional and emotional supports to millions of teachers and their students—for a price tag the country can not only afford, but sustain long-term.

In dozens of districts, with thousands of educators, Opportunity Culture highlights important lessons that show how U.S. education can think anew:

LESSON 1:

Teachers everywhere can achieve excellence—high-growth student learning—*with guidance and support*.

Prior well-intended reforms have left millions of students—disproportionately low-income students and students of color—behind their enormous potential long before the pandemic. These students need substantial, long-term support, not temporary programs and tinkering.

Over the past 50 years, demands on educators have risen, yet policymakers and systems have provided little guidance and largely ineffective support for teachers.

But when schools add small, collaborative teaching teams led by excellent teachers, teachers get personal, high-impact guidance and support that surveys show they crave.

LESSON 2:

Other reforms—including curricula and teaching methods—are better when implemented by *these collaborative teams*.

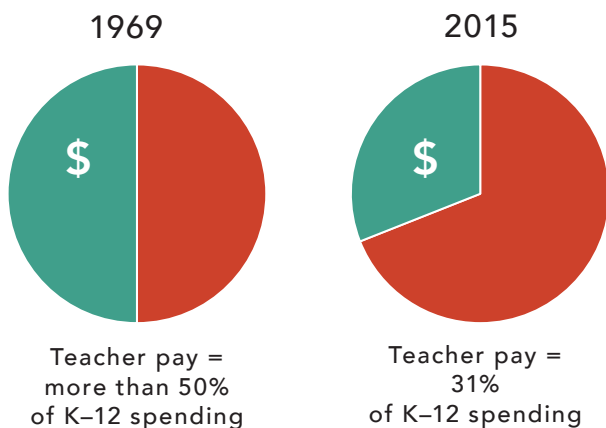
LESSON 3:

Multi-classroom leader teams with tutoring paraprofessionals offer a way to boost learning while addressing the massive teacher shortage—**nearly 200,000 annually¹** by 2025—severely intensifying current shortages in hard-to-staff schools.

LESSON 4:

Race matters—some changes *also* boost students' access to teachers of color, and that improves student learning and later success.

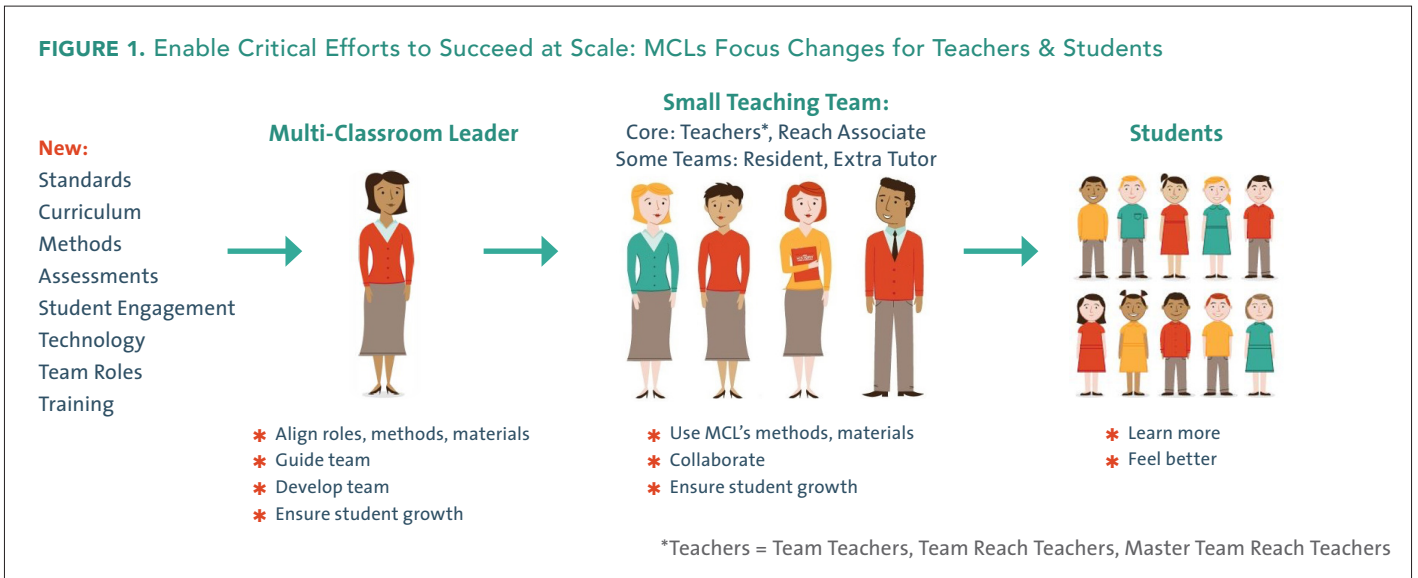
K–12 spending per pupil rose 145 percent after inflation between 1969 and 2015—but teacher pay per hour fell



Learn more on the following pages:

- The positive results of **multi-classroom leader teams**
- How complementary efforts can magnify these teams' impact
- How federal policy can bring these benefits to U.S. schools in **financially sustainable ways**

FIGURE 1. Enable Critical Efforts to Succeed at Scale: MCLs Focus Changes for Teachers & Students



A **multi-classroom leader (MCL)** is a teacher with a track record of high-growth student learning who leads lesson planning, data analysis, instructional changes, and coaching for a small, collaborative team. The MCL continues to teach some portion of the time. Accountable for team results, MCLs earn a supplement that averages more than 20% of base pay. **Multi-school leaders (MSLs)** are in a similarly constructed role for a few schools.

Team Teachers teach on a team led by an MCL. Some serve as *Team Reach Teachers*, reaching more students alone or as a team, and earning more. *Master Team Reach Teachers*, who have a record of high-growth learning, reach significantly more students and/or coach other teacher(s) on the team, for additional pay.

Reach Associates are advanced paraprofessionals who support MCL teams and tutor students in small groups. MCLs give heavy guidance on lessons, student

groups, and classroom management. **Residents** in modified reach associate roles also tutor, and they learn the full teaching role while earning pay and benefits.

Research indicates a large, positive impact on student learning and strong teacher satisfaction from Multi-Classroom Leadership. (See Figures 2 and 3.)

Just as important, multi-classroom leaders already play a critical filtering and focusing role: They lead small teams of teachers—an average of six—and paraprofessionals in using ever-changing approaches to curricula, instruction, technology, and more to ensure high-growth learning for all the students served by each team. (See Figure 1.)

In Opportunity Culture, school teams—which include teachers—have the power to reallocate existing dollars, addressing immediate needs and making new roles and extra pay sustainable over time. See also the Opportunity Culture Principles on page 4.

FIGURE 2. Strong Learning Gains for MCL Teams

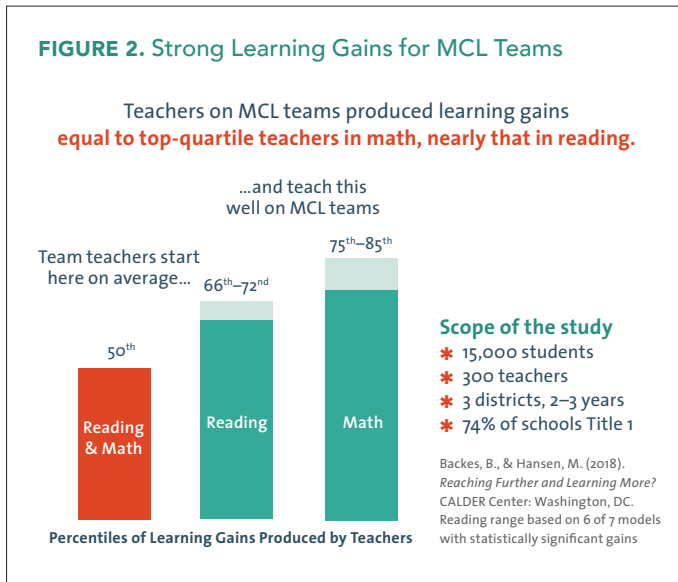
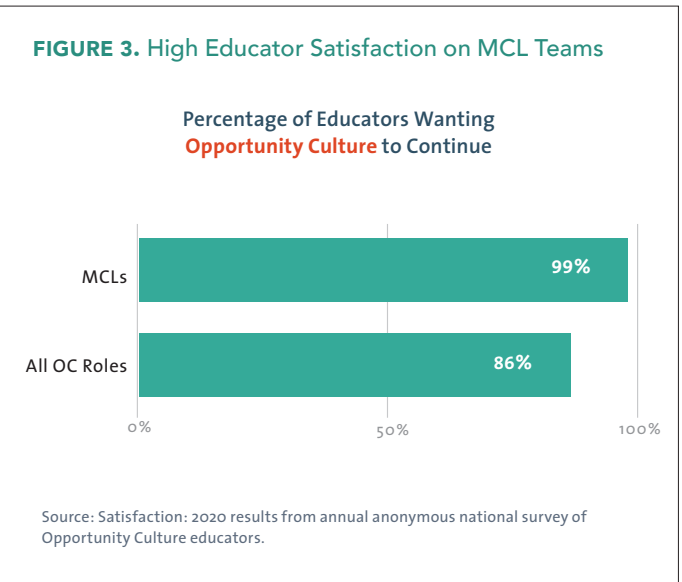


FIGURE 3. High Educator Satisfaction on MCL Teams



Federal Policy Recommendations

Our schools and students need many changes, including universal technology access. Though other improvements are certainly warranted, our recommendations focus on a package of high-impact changes for public pre-K–12 education. This package would help all students—but focus on those most in need—and be sustainable for the long term. These recommendations collectively put more power, more time, and more pay into the hands of the people who have always gotten the job done: classroom teachers, with guidance from outstanding team leaders and support from paraprofessionals, as in other professions.

#1: Scale Up Multi-Classroom & Multi-School Leadership

Recommendation: Use existing and new federal funding to scale paid multi-classroom and multi-school leader teams that include teaching and paraprofessional roles.

Potential benefits:

- Increase student learning growth to today's 75th percentile, on average, within regular budgets for sustainability
- Increase schoolwide high growth by more than 50%
- Provide weekly or daily teacher collaboration
- Allow MCLs to reach six times more students than regular classroom teachers, increasing access to teachers of color who become MCLs

Because Multi-Classroom Leadership is essential to the learning results, political viability, and financial sustainability of other improvements at scale, policies to scale up the number of MCLs are crucial.

Policies to reach scale should include:

Mobilizing existing funding streams:

- ✓ Make transitioning to teacher and principal teams with sustainably paid multi-classroom leaders a priority use of funds in existing competitive grants for educator support (Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund, Supporting Effective Educator Development Program), formula grants (Title I and Title II), and Covid-recovery packages.

- ✓ Clarify that permanent federal funding streams, especially Title I, may be used for MCL pay, supportive roles, and the costs of transition.
- ✓ Prioritize including Multi-School Leadership, to stabilize multi-classroom leader roles when principal turnover occurs.

Creating a new funding stream:

Through a new, competitive opportunity, fund technical assistance for districts and schools to scale *sustainably paid* multi-classroom and multi-school teams.

In competitions, favor applicants that plan to reach all schools within three to 10 years—depending on district size—with teaching teams that:

- ✓ are led by teachers with prior high-growth student learning;
- ✓ include paraprofessional tutors and residents;
- ✓ are sustainably funded within regular budgets; and
- ✓ prioritize reach and recruitment of teachers of color.

Limiting funding to the costs of transitioning to team models will prevent temporary roles and maximize the number of districts, teachers, and students who benefit from federal funds.

OPPORTUNITY CULTURE PRINCIPLES

Teams of teachers and school leaders must tailor roles, budgets, and school operations 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

#2: Pay Teacher Residents, within Regular Budgets

Recommendation: Fund residency design support (for districts and degree programs) and incentives for educator preparation programs to create paid pathways to teaching through paraprofessional roles and other tutoring positions that are on multi-classroom leader teams. Principal residents, likewise, can learn on the job from multi-school leaders while earning full pay and performing critical services for schools.

Potential benefits:

- Aspiring educators get better development
- Residents receive pay and benefits as MCL team members, within schools' budgets
- Financial barriers are reduced, helping to diversify teacher pipeline racially and socioeconomically

#3: Infuse Schools with Tutoring, Permanently

Recommendation: Fund infusion of tutors to help students catch up from the effects of Covid-19 and prior longstanding barriers. Place more tutors in schools with a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students. In addition to funding tutors employed by schools, fund community organizations that provide tutoring, in-person and online. Make some school-based tutoring roles permanent by scaling up multi-classroom leader teams that have paraprofessional roles and residents who provide tutoring.

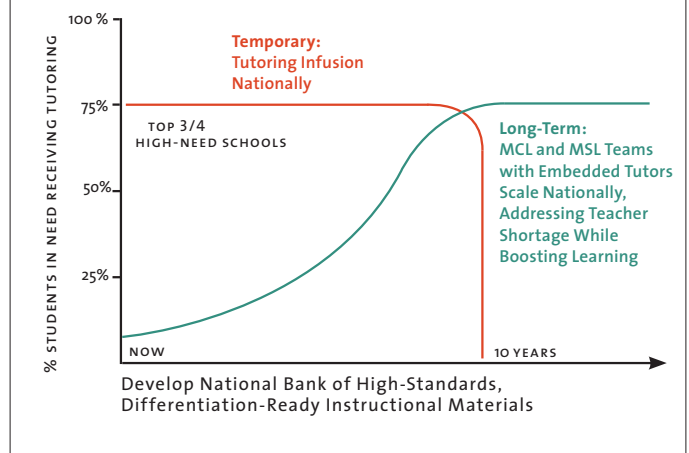
Potential benefits:

- Students get more help from paraprofessional tutors, who get **big learning results**, according to **research**²
- Infusion increases the hours of tutoring for students, including those already receiving some small-group tutoring on multi-classroom leader (MCL) teams
- As MCL roles spread, more tutors receive direction and guidance from MCLs, better targeting their assistance to boost learning
- The cost for continued tutoring on MCL teams fits into their budgets long-term (see Figure 4)

#4: Surround Students with Mental Health Support

Recommendation: In addition to encouraging universal social-emotional instruction, temporarily fund extra counselors—both certified and paraprofessional inter-

FIGURE 4. Long-term, High-Growth Student Learning at Scale: Dual Tutoring & Multi-Classroom Leadership Rollout



ventionists/mentors—to support individual students during pandemic recovery. Provide guidance to certified, school-based counselors with master's degrees to help them triage referrals from teachers and MCL teams and coordinate others who can provide extra empathetic listening and emotional support for students—temporary school-based tutors, **student success coaches**³, and community organization staff.

Potential benefits:

- Research shows school-based mental health services **improve GPAs** and are much **needed**⁴
- Schools build on universal social-emotional teaching to serve individuals' specific needs, too
- Leveraging certified counselors gives students far more personal contact, listening, and connection

#5: Support Development of a High-Quality Lesson Bank

Recommendation: To meet diverse state needs, organize a national bank of lessons that are:

- ✓ high-standards and rigor-aligned,
- ✓ differentiation-ready,
- ✓ culturally relevant, and
- ✓ research-backed and edit-ready.

Materials can include free and for-fee options. A well-organized resource will help MCLs and other educators avoid "from scratch" approaches, saving teachers substantial time for editing, practicing lessons, and engag-

ing students. As Multi-Classroom Leadership spreads, teams will have even more time to customize instruction to help all students make learning growth. A resource that includes lesson content aligned with available jobs will help with economic recovery and stability.

Potential benefits:

- High-quality materials will **increase learning**⁵
- Teachers, who work on average 50 to 55 hours weekly, will save millions of collective hours annually
- Schools can provide curriculum that prepares students for jobs available in the economy

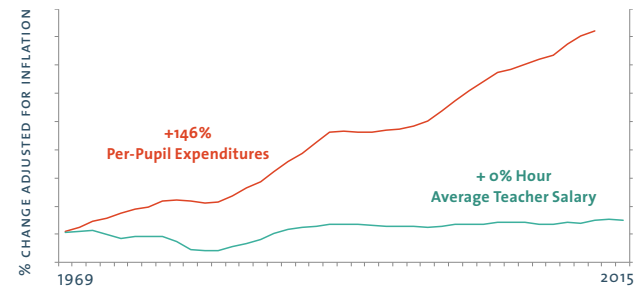
#6: Prioritize Higher Base Pay

Recommendation: Commit to spending 50% of new federal funds to raise base pay of classroom teachers. Establish a goal to restore the historic proportion of spending devoted to this purpose (Figure 5). Encourage states to do the same over time.

Potential benefits:

- Shifting average base pay to \$100,000 or more is possible *within budget* by restoring spending on classroom teacher pay to its historic proportion of overall spending (see Figure 5)
- As Multi-Classroom Leadership scales up, far more teachers will have a multi-classroom leader to help them achieve **high-growth**⁶ learning, giving higher pay broad political appeal and lessening teacher shortages

FIGURE 5. Build Support for Public Education and Higher Base Pay



- Teacher pay made up 51% of K–12 spending in 1969.
- If still at that level, teachers would earn nearly \$140,000 on average today.
- But, by 2015, that percentage had dropped to just 31%.
- Use federal leadership—and proven high-growth learning by teachers with a multi-classroom leader—to begin restoring focus on classroom teachers: \$100,000 average pay.

Source: Analysis originally appeared in Hassel, E. A., & Hassel, B. C. (2013). *An Opportunity Culture for all: Making teaching a highly paid, high-impact profession*. Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact. Updated figures from Hassel, B. C., and Hassel, E. A. (2020). *Rethinking school staffing*, in *Getting the most bang for the education buck*. Teachers College Press.

As teachers push through their exhaustion to the end of this school year, they will confront the calls for post-pandemic change, and many will eye such calls warily.

Educators and students need proven solutions that can bring them hope, joy, and educational success. Our recommendations, with the combination of instructional, social-emotional, and financial support, provide that.

The way is clear; we call on our leaders to provide the *will* to bring opportunity anew to our country's schools.

Notes

1. Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2019, March 26). *The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought: The first report in 'The Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market' series*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-large-and-growing-and-worse-than-we-thought-the-first-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/>; Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016, September). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/A_Coming_Crisis_in_Teaching_REPORT.pdf

2. See, for example: Slavin, R. (2018, April 5). New findings on tutoring: Four shockers [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://robert-slavinsblog.wordpress.com/2018/04/05/new-findings-on-tutoring-four-shockers/>; Nickow, A., Oreopoulos, P., & Quan, V. (2020, July). The impressive effects of tutoring on PreK–12 learning: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the experimental evidence [working paper 27476]. Cambridge, Massachusetts: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <https://www.nber.org/papers/w27476>; Mahnken, K. (2021, March 8). Study: Chicago tutoring program delivered huge math gains; personalization may be the key. *The 74*. Retrieved from <https://www.the74million.org/study-chicago-tutoring-program-delivered-huge-math-gains-personalization-may-be-the-key/>

3. Everyone Graduates Center at John Hopkins University, the COVID Collaborative, & City Year. (2021). *Framework for action: Building a corps for student success*. Retrieved from http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CorpsforStudent-SuccessFramework_FINAL.pdf

4. Larson, S., Chapman, S., Spetz, J., & Brindis, C. D. (2017, September). Chronic childhood trauma, mental health, academic achievement, and school-based health center mental health services. *Journal of School Health*. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28766317/>; NAMI California. (n.d.). School during the pandemic: Mental health impacts on students [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://namica.org/blog/impact-on-the-mental-health-of-students-during-covid-19/>

5. Steiner, D. (2017, March). Curriculum research: What we know and where we need to go. *StandardsWork*. Retrieved from <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/62999/sw-curriculum-research-report-fnl.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

6. Hansen, M., & Backes, B. (2018, January 25). New teaching model yields learning improvement for students in math [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/01/25/new-teaching-model-yields-learning-improvement-for-students-in-math/>

Acknowledgements

For more information, contact at Public Impact:

Stephanie Dean, senior vice president of Opportunity Culture policy and outreach

Alison Harris Welcher, vice president of school turnarounds and transformation

Bryan Hassel, co-president

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