

# MULTI-CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP

## SCHOOL MODEL

BY PUBLIC IMPACT

**M**ulti-Classroom Leadership is the cornerstone of an Opportunity Culture. Teachers with a record of high-growth student learning and leadership competencies, known as multi-classroom leaders or MCLs, both teach part of the time and lead small, collaborative teams of two to eight teachers, paraprofessionals, and teacher residents in the same grade or subject to meet each MCL's standards of excellence. MCLs establish each team member's roles and goals at least annually, determine how students spend time, and organize teaching roles to fit each teacher's strengths, content knowledge, and professional development goals. Each team uses the MCL's methods and tools. The MCL's duties include these:

- \* Co-plan, co-teach, model excellent instruction, coach, and give feedback;
- \* Teach part of the time, in own class or otherwise (such as leading small groups);
- \* Lead the team to analyze student learning data and change instruction for high-growth learning by every student;
- \* Collaborate with the team, using the team's ideas and innovations that the MCL agrees may improve learning;
- \* Take accountability for learning and development of all students taught by the team members;
- \* Lead teacher development;
- \* Help choose and evaluate team members, dismissing low performers if necessary (in cooperation with the principal); and
- \* Participate on a schoolwide instructional team of leaders with other MCLs, the principal, and others.

MCLs earn substantial pay supplements—typically funded by reducing the number of non-classroom specialists (some of whom may become MCLs) and/or by reallocating other costs within the school. An MCL may also be remotely located, leading a team whose members are at one site or spread among several sites, using webcams and other technology to make this feasible.

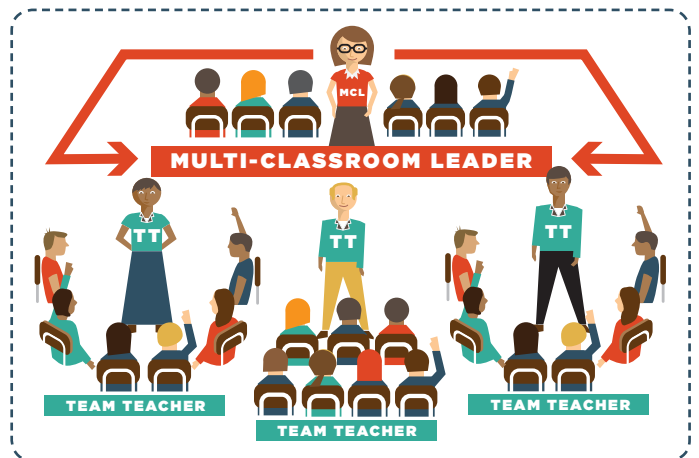
Estimated Reach Extension Effect: 100%–700% more students reached by excellent teachers. For more on this model, or to combine the MCL role with other advanced roles in which team teachers extend their reach to more students (team reach teachers and master team reach teachers), see <https://opportunityculture.org/multi-classroom-leadership/>.

### MORE DETAIL

This model enables excellent teachers to reach many more students, primarily by leading teaching teams while continuing to teach. MCLs lead the team of teachers to jointly build each student's academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and organizational skills. MCL teams have a median of five teachers, but experienced, successful MCLs may lead larger teams of six to eight, while some lead smaller teams.

Students who would not otherwise have access to an excellent teacher's standards and methods can now have them, either directly from MCLs or from teachers on their teams.

In 2018 research, teachers who were on average at the 50th percentile in student learning gains, who then joined teams led by MCLs (who had prior high growth as teachers), produced learning gains equivalent to those of teachers from the 75th to 85th percentile in math, and, in six of the seven statistical models, from 66th to 72nd percentile in reading. Teams studied had a median of five teachers in



addition to the MCL. Student growth began to increase schoolwide after MCLs were added in only part of a school. Higher pay supplements for MCLs, provided through reallocations of school budgets, were associated with better outcomes for team teachers.<sup>1</sup>

Schools of all sizes and poverty levels benefit from Multi-Classroom Leadership. Districts should spread the MCL role as quickly as feasible to as many schools as possible to achieve the best learning results for the most students. Schools must balance keeping MCL teams small with reaching all grades and core subjects with high-growth MCLs as soon as possible.

Multi-Classroom Leadership provides schools with a sustainably funded, internal leadership development pipeline, and it promotes development of team members, while also reaching more students immediately with excellent teachers' standards and methods. A natural, sustainably funded career progression emerges as MCLs increase the number of classrooms and teachers they lead—for example, an “MCL I” leads a team of two to five teachers, and an “MCL II,” who has a record of high-growth student learning as an MCL I, leads a team of six to eight teachers.

This model requires schedule and pay changes, described below. Facilities changes are not needed, but ideally the team's classrooms are located near one another. Digital assessments and organizing tools to analyze the whole team's students can help.

**Role Changes for Excellent Teachers:** The role changes for MCLs are the crux of this model, and all other changes must support the ability of MCLs to help small teaching teams produce high-growth learning for all of the team's students, for which the MCL is formally accountable.

As noted in the summary above, MCLs teach part of the time and lead small, collaborative teams of two to eight teachers, paraprofessionals, and teacher residents in the same grade or subject to meet each MCL's standards of excellence. Each team uses the MCL's methods and tools. The responsibilities of MCLs require them to at least:

\* **Co-plan, co-teach, model excellent instruction, coach, and give feedback:** The MCL sets **high standards** for instruction, through lesson plan content and methods, interim assessments, and interim and annual targets for student progress in content, higher-order thinking, and social-emotional skills. The MCL then leads the team in providing great instruction through co-teaching, modeling, coaching, and providing feedback on each team member's instruction. The MCL also leads the team to set high expectations of achievement for all students; hold students accountable for high expectations of behavior and engagement; and create strong relationships and regular communications with students and their families.

1. This study meets ESSA Evidence Level 2. For more information, see: 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/>

\* **Teach part of the time, in own class or otherwise (such as leading small groups):** The MCL clarifies all **team members' roles**, including the MCL's, such as who: teaches which aspects of subjects; teaches whole classes and small groups; tutors; grades; monitors student progress; plans lessons; plans instructional changes; supervises projects, skills practice, and digital instruction; completes noninstructional tasks, etc.

\* **Lead the team to analyze student learning data and change instruction for high-growth learning by every student:** The MCL leads the team in analyzing data to determine **how students spend time**—what subjects/sub-subjects when; large group, small group, and individual time; face-to-face and digital instruction; knowledge and skills acquisition; higher-order thinking—analytical, creative, and conceptual; social-emotional skill development; and how students are grouped for each unit to achieve high growth by students at all starting levels.

\* **Collaborate with the team, using the team's ideas and innovations that the MCL agrees may improve learning:** The MCL establishes **methods and creates instructional tools** and materials that team teachers use in all classrooms, in collaboration with the team.

\* **Take accountability for learning and development of all students taught by the team members:** The MCL is **formally accountable** for the outcomes of all of the team's students.

\* **Lead teacher development:** The MCL provides **frequent, on-the-job feedback and development** for team teachers, and organizes and schedules this time for individual and team development.

\* **Help choose and evaluate team members,** dismissing low performers if necessary (in cooperation with the principal): The MCL helps the principal **evaluate team teachers for potential role changes and increased responsibility.**

\* **Participate on a schoolwide instructional team of leaders with other MCLs, the principal, and others:** Schoolwide teams of leaders are crucial to consistent excellent instruction and a strong school culture, and to the development of MCLs.

See the Opportunity Culture **Instructional Leadership and Excellence** and the **Multi-Classroom Leadership** web pages for links to variations of the MCL model, job descriptions, free tools, videos, and more to help MCLs and teachers succeed.



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

**New Roles for Other Staff:** Teachers on each team play a wide variety of roles of varying difficulty and breadth as the MCL helps them discover their strengths. Teachers on an MCL's team may include:

- \* **Team teachers** who collaborate to provide outstanding teaching with the MCL's guidance.

In a model variation in which team teachers also reach more students than typical, the team may also include:

- \* **Team reach teachers** who extend their reach to more students with extra paraprofessional support;
- \* **Master team reach teachers** who achieve high learning growth consistently and who help an MCL lead a larger team and/or reach *far* more students directly with high-growth learning.

See the model variation that includes Team Reach on the [Multi-Classroom Leadership](#) web page.

As MCLs begin their roles, schools typically reduce the number of non-classroom instructional specialist positions that provide remedial and advanced instruction. (They do not reduce English as a second language and special needs specialists.) Some instructional specialists may be candidates for MCL or team teacher roles.

An MCL's team may also include **reach associates**—teaching assistants who contribute to excellence by providing instructional and noninstructional support to a teaching team, as designated by the team's multi-classroom leader. It may also include teacher residents, who are learning to teach under the MCL's leadership while earning a degree or certification.

The MCL model can also be used to create part-time team teacher roles when a teacher requests such a role, which may help retain excellent, experienced teachers who would otherwise leave the profession at various stages of their career for family or other personal reasons.

**Impact on Students:** Students who would not otherwise have an excellent teacher benefit from the standards, materials, and methods of the MCL, who has a record of prior high-growth student learning. A very large number of students at all levels of advancement benefit from this model when schools select MCLs well, keep teams small (median of five, but two to eight teachers is common), and use the model to ensure instructional excellence by all on the team.

**Scheduling Changes:** Schedules must change to allow MCL and team planning time and individual coaching time during school hours. The schedule must also accommodate the non-standard personal teaching load and role of most MCLs. Each MCL's schedule will vary based on the amount of time they spend teaching and on the needs of the team each year. At the school level, collaborative team time for grades or subjects may be staggered across the school day when paraprofessionals and other teachers can supervise and instruct students. Ideally, teams meet multiple times each

## 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**

week, or for one long block, for student data analysis, instructional improvement, and professional development.

**Pay Changes:** Each MCL earns more, depending upon how many classrooms they can lead successfully. Average MCL supplements have been 20 percent of average base pay, and as high as 50 percent.

**Cost Impact:** This model is budget neutral in all Opportunity Culture schools. The reallocation of specialist roles and other budget changes at the school level are the primary ways to fund higher pay. Supplements are funded only through reallocations of regular school budgets, not temporary grants. Schools may fund the temporary costs of transition to an Opportunity Culture with part of the savings from reallocations, then raise pay more later.

When the MCL model is **combined with Team Reach**, in which teachers on an MCL's team reach more students directly with extra paraprofessional help, some MCL pay may be funded by other position exchanges.

**Changes to Class/Group Size:** None required. Typically, schools with MCLs use substantial amounts of small-group learning time. More rarely, some schools that start with small class sizes increase their class sizes slightly while also adding more small-group and individual instruction, made possible by wise use of paraprofessionals and teacher residents.

**Facilities Changes:** None. Teachers on a team ideally have classrooms near one another in the building, especially at the elementary level.

**Technology Needs:** None. Digital assessments and organizing tools to analyze the whole team's students can help.

**Estimated Reach Effect Calculation Assumptions:** Figure 1 shows the increases in students reached when MCLs are responsible for increasing numbers of classrooms. Exact reach effects may depend on how many students each MCL’s team continues to teach and how often.

Because moving to an Opportunity Culture fundamentally changes the structure of a traditional school, nearly all schools and districts have found they need assistance in planning their transition to these models. **Contact Public Impact** for more information.

**FIGURE 1. REACHING MORE STUDENTS WITH AN EXCELLENT TEACHER, THE MULTI-CLASSROOM LEADER**

# of Classes Led by Excellent Teacher	# of Students with Excellent Teacher Responsible for Learning	Reach Effect: % Increase in Students with Excellent Teacher Responsible for Learning
1	24	0%
2	48	100%
3	72	200%
4	96	300%
5	120	400%
6	144	500%
7	168	600%
8	192	700%

### Acknowledgements

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