



The slide features a decorative border at the top with a repeating pattern of small squares in red, orange, and yellow. The main title "Opportunity Culture" is in a large, dark blue font. In the top right corner, there is a logo consisting of a blue star with the text "BUILDING AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE FOR AMERICA'S EDUCATORS" and the website "www.opportunityculture.org" below it. The subtitle "Change: Why We Must, How We Can, Together" is centered in a dark blue font. Below the subtitle, there is a large teal rectangular area on the left containing the "PUBLIC IMPACT" logo, which includes the text "PUBLIC IMPACT" and a row of five colorful stars. To the right of the teal area is an illustration of five diverse professionals (three women and two men) standing in a row, dressed in business attire.

Today, I want to share some thoughts with you about where our school [or district] is today.

What's working, and what's really not working as well as we need it to, for our students and our teachers.

And I want to share a vision for our future: how we can create a much **better** future for our students and staff, and **how** I think we can get there—**together**.

# Opportunity Culture

Today

**Our Current Reality**

Our Much Better Future

How We Will Change: *Together*

Let's start with where we are.


## Our Current Reality

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A Story

Strengths Of Our School Community

Unfortunate Facts

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**Notes to speaker (not to be read aloud—edit these with your own experiences):**

*The goal is to help your audience understand the current problem(s) and the impact on students and teachers. The method: Share a **personal story** of a student whose potential was not fulfilled at your school (or in your district).*

*Share **facts** about student learning that you find unacceptable in your school (or district), and their consequence for students.*

*Optional: tell a story of a teacher who was excellent but who could not help other teachers excel, and who could not help more students without leaving teaching—perhaps it is your OWN story. And/or tell a story of a teacher who struggled to help students with many different needs, while a great teacher down the hall was not in a role to help.*

1) **A story.** Tell a story about a STUDENT or TEACHER who has fallen short of his/her potential. Tips:

- Ideally this will be a real story from your school, or a similar school you have worked in.
- Change the name and any overly identifying facts of any student you discuss to protect privacy.
- You can also get a teacher or teachers to give testimonials about how they could not advance to help their peers while continuing to teach, or how they have struggled to help all students and need help day in and day out.

Example:

I want to share a story of a student with you.

- Let's call this student Sam (or Sarah).
- Sam was a fireball. The boy had energy. *He had something to say about pretty much everything.*
- But Sam's energy came out in pretty much every way EXCEPT his academic achievement.
- He came to us about a year behind in his reading and math skills—which was actually not bad considering his circumstances.
- He lived with his mother and two older sisters. His dad was not in the picture. We learned his mom was working two jobs to hold things together. His sisters really took care of Sam, but they were just kids themselves.
- They had moved at least once every year since Sam was born. Whenever his mom got sick, as mothers sometimes do, she lost pay and her job was at risk. They had to keep moving for job changes.
- And I'll be honest here: his teachers, good teachers, got fed up with Sam. He talked too much. He didn't sit still. They, we, started to BELIEVE that he just could not learn very well. And he left MY school, OUR school, still behind, just like he was when he got here.
- Now, doesn't it seem crazy to say that a boy *who has something to say about everything* CAN'T READ?
- We all know that's crazy. Because Sam COULD THINK. So he COULD HAVE read, very, very well. But he just didn't. He came to school tired. He was distracted. At some point, he got scared. He started to BELIEVE that he was stupid.
- If Sam were the only kid like this, maybe I could live with that. But he's not. There are a lot of Sams around here, and a lot have come and gone.
- And you KNOW what happens when they are gone. A kid hits 16, fails a class or two, and then that kid drops out, for good.
- And every one of them COULD have succeeded in many, many ways at school.
- Folks, this is not right.
- Of course, we can't control everything. We didn't have Sam until he got here, and his life outside of school was not easy.
- But WHEN HE IS HERE, WE MUST BELIEVE that Sam and every kid like him can make BIG leaps every year.
- And we must take the SPECIFIC STEPS that will help him.
- Then he will believe in himself, too.
- We CAN do better. In a minute I'm going to tell you about some schools around the country that are doing a lot better with the Sams and Sarahs, boys and girls, they have. And I want to start a conversation about how we can do more for our kids, too.

2) **Strengths of our School Community.** This is not to say everything is bad. We have a lot of good things here in our school community. Let's think about those for a moment.

Examples:

- Some of our students are doing well: *(list facts about student learning improvement or achievement, IF true. Avoiding touting anything you would not consider great for your own child as a positive fact.)*
- We have many parents who are committed to our school community. *(Give examples of*

*how parents contribute)*

- We have some very committed teachers and staff members. They come to work and do their best every single day, and they genuinely care about our kids, your kids.
- *Other—share other things that will be meaningful to your audience of teachers, parents, or others.*

**3) Unfortunate Facts:** But there are some unfortunate facts about our school, too, that I'd like to share (*Consider any facts that are relevant to your school (or district)*):

- Achievement gaps by family income
- And/or overall low academic pass rates
- How too few students are doing advanced/honors work (or how school can't offer advanced work to all who could do it)
- How *who* does advanced/honors work is predictable by student family income
- High or increased teacher turnover rates
- Difficulty recruiting teachers

**Conclude with:**

- We all know what these shortcomings mean for our students: (*use facts here that are relevant to your students' prospects*)
- Albert Einstein said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.
- So what CAN we do differently to get different results?

# Our Much Better Future

## A Story: A teacher, a school

### Facts



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4

*[Goal: Show the benefits in a personal story about an Opportunity Culture teacher who was able to help far more students. Method: Tell a story. Use facts from Opportunity Culture dashboard.]*

- This story is about a middle school science teacher named Bobby.
- He considered studying to be a doctor, but he was CALLED to teaching.
- As a teacher, Bobby really connected with kids. As he says, “I learned I was more than a teacher; I was a mentor, big brother, coach and one of their biggest fans.”
- He worked with students a lot like Sam, ones with a lot of potential but who had many disadvantages.
- He was a great teacher, recognized as teacher of the year in a special zone in his district with many disadvantaged students, nearly all of them living in poverty.
- Bobby was ready for more, but his only option to advance was to become an administrator or a facilitator. He wanted to stay close to the kids, so he became a facilitator.
- But he wasn’t really teaching kids any more, he had a lot of teachers to support so he couldn’t really help them as much as he wanted to, and some of the ones he wanted to help didn’t want to learn from him. And he didn’t earn any more for it.
- Then along came a new program. This program was different: It created roles for teachers like Bobby to reach more students but also to continue teaching, and to have a clear role to lead a team of teachers, with real authority and time at school to plan and collaborate, coach, co-teach with, and model for his team.

- In his *first* year as a team leader, Bobby's team's students—about 400 of them—scored an average of more than 5 on his state's value-added scoring system. *A mere 2 exceeds growth*. They gained double digits in proficiency rates.
- Bobby didn't do this alone. He worked with a team of teacher-leaders like him in other subjects and grades.
- This team worked with the principal and assistant every week—to review student progress, to identify problems, and to solve them.
- He was part of a team of leaders, and he himself led a team of teachers—not all of whom *wanted* to learn from him at first. But they did, and their students got the benefit.
- In Bobby's school, despite many challenges, the **whole school got high growth** across the core subjects with these new roles.
- **The Sams [sub your student story name] got a taste of success**, many for the first time in their lives.
- **Teachers across this school learned what success felt like**, too, and how to achieve it.
- And those teacher-leaders earned **pay supplements in five figures**.
- All of that was funded by their regular budgets, so the pay would not disappear when a grant ran out.

Now, this kind of growth could apply to students already in the middle who can leap ahead. Or to advanced students who need more growth to be like top international peers.

And this approach, called Opportunity Culture, is what I am going to tell you more about. Why? Because Opportunity Culture schools get these kinds of results:

- **Students are up to 70% more likely to have high-growth learning** in an Opportunity Culture classroom.
- **Students are half as likely to make low growth**, even in very poor schools.
- Teachers **earn an average of about \$11,000 more in advanced roles**, and some as much as 50 percent more than average base pay.
- All teachers can **earn more** for serving on a team.
- Teachers **gain time** during school hours to plan and collaborate to improve student learning.
- And **teachers are on the teams that decide exactly how to implement** this and run their schools to have a culture of excellence and opportunity for everyone.

**How can we have this for our students and our teachers?**



[Optional: 7 minutes of questions, most of which will be answered with “Great question. I have some slides on that, and I’ll share those with you in a few minutes”]

Let’s shift now to telling you more about why we need this Opportunity Culture approach and how it works. Because it’s an approach that lets us reach more students with our best teachers and give all our teachers much more support on the job.

We can get there *together*.

We can decide exactly how to do this in our school(s).

We can make this change comfortable and exciting for our teachers, students, and parents. Here’s what I promise:

- We will involve teachers in any school design changes we make
- I will listen to your concerns and answer your questions
- I will communicate with parents and teachers and get your feedback
- We will decide together how fast to change, but I also will press to reach as *many* teachers and students with this as we can, fast

We can get these results for our kids.

**[Conclusion]**

- [For teacher audience:] Let’s look now at how your jobs as teachers have changed and



how this approach can help.

- [For parent audience:] Let's look now at how teachers' jobs have changed, how what students need has changed, and how our schools just haven't kept up. I'll show you what we intend to do about it to help your children.

And we can do it fast. So we stop letting Sams *[sub your student story name]* slip through our fingers year after year.

*But* I can't do this alone! I need teachers, parents, and students, too, to help make it happen for our school.

[Ending 1:] So let me share more with you now about how Opportunity Culture works.

[Ending 2:] Next time we meet, I will share more with you about how Opportunity Culture works.

[Ending 3:] Before I share more with you about how this works, I can take a few questions about what I've said so far.