



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arizona Agency Wins TIF Grant to Implement Opportunity Culture Teaching Roles

Roles Extend the Reach of Excellent Teachers to More Students, for More Pay

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.— Using a \$60 million federal grant, Arizona’s Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA) will help at least five small and medium-size Phoenix-area districts and one charter network design and implement Opportunity Culture school models that reach many more students with excellent teachers. Teachers in new, advanced roles will earn substantial pay supplements, which will continue after the grant ends.

Opportunity Culture schools create teacher and teacher-leader roles that aim to provide all students with access to excellent teaching, consistently. These roles extend great teachers’ reach to more students and provide teachers with teacher-led, on-the-job learning and paid career advancement opportunities, all funded within regular school budgets.

Money used from the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant will support districts and schools in making the transition to new school models. Pay for advanced roles will be funded with each school’s budget, making Opportunity Culture compensation sustainable. Less than 2 percent of the TIF grant will be used for temporary transition costs.

In each Opportunity Culture school, a team of teachers and administrators chooses among [models](#) that use job redesign and age-appropriate technology to reach more students with personalized, high-standards instruction—one hallmark of great teachers. School teams redesign schedules to provide additional school-day time for teacher planning and collaboration, typically with teacher-leaders leading teams and providing frequent, on-the-job development while continuing to teach part time.

The teams reallocate school budgets to provide for pay supplements for Opportunity Culture roles. In current Opportunity Culture schools, supplements are as high as 50 percent, and an average of about 20 percent, of base salaries.

Arizona and its districts join 10 other districts in six other states nationwide that are already designing or implementing Opportunity Culture models, with more joining each year since the first schools implemented in 2013. The Opportunity Culture concept was created by Public Impact to address the need for all students to receive great teaching year after year to close gaps and leap ahead, and to give teachers higher-paying career paths that let them reach more students and lead other teachers while continuing to teach. Public Impact and its partner organizations provide assistance to schools and districts in the planning and early implementation of their Opportunity Culture models. Public Impact publishes school models and support materials for educators online for free at OpportunityCulture.org.

“A recent survey shows Arizona school districts have over 8,000 teacher vacancies. Low teacher pay and support are cited as the reason. School districts need strategies for recruiting, retaining, and sustaining effective educators. I know Opportunity Culture is one of the best strategies we can offer,” said Maricopa County Superintendent of Schools Don Covey.

Lori Renfro, assistant superintendent of Human Capital Management Systems, who oversaw the TIF applications, also noted that Arizona is facing an unprecedented teacher shortage.

“The partnership with Opportunity Culture has come at a perfect time,” Renfro said. “Opportunity Culture will empower our school districts to capitalize on the talent they already have, and increase their likelihood of attracting higher-quality candidates in the future.”

[Recently released results](#) on student growth in North Carolina showed that 59 percent of the state’s Opportunity Culture schools exceeded their student growth targets in 2015–16, more than double the percentage of N.C. schools overall, at just 28 percent.

Similarly, high-poverty Title I Opportunity Culture schools exceeded growth targets at much higher rates than in North Carolina overall: 56 percent versus 26 percent of Title I-eligible schools statewide.

In Arizona, Roosevelt Elementary School District, Wilson Elementary School District, Nadaburg Unified School District, Mobile Elementary School District, Maricopa County Regional School District, Incito Schools, and possibly one more district will be part of the Opportunity Culture initiative. These districts, a mix of rural and smaller urban districts and a district formed to help students in transition graduate, include more than 1,000 teachers who could benefit once Opportunity Culture plans are fully implemented.

The TIF grant will also fund other efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators, such as creation of comprehensive human capital management systems and performance-based evaluation and support systems.

About Public Impact

Public Impact is a national organization whose mission is to dramatically improve learning outcomes for all children in the U.S., with a special focus on students who are not served well. We are a team of professionals from many backgrounds, including former teachers. We are researchers, thought leaders, tool-builders, and on-the-ground consultants who work with leading education reformers.

Learn more about an Opportunity Culture on the OpportunityCulture.org website, which provides [tools](#)—all free—to build an Opportunity Culture, [videos of teachers and principals](#), and related [resources](#). Funding for development of resources to help schools design and implement Opportunity Culture models and support teachers taking on new roles has been provided by [numerous foundations](#).

Educators in Opportunity Culture schools are [publishing a series of columns](#) about their work on RealClearEducation.com.

For more information, please visit www.OpportunityCulture.org. To arrange an interview with Public Impact, contact Sharon Keschull Barrett at Sharon.Barrett@publicimpact.com; 919.929.4544.