In selected subjects and classrooms, students shift into classes of teachers who have consistently achieved excellent outcomes. These teachers agree to increase their class sizes in exchange for higher pay. Students shift from solid teachers and novice teachers, who have not yet demonstrated consistent excellence. These teachers earn less but have proportionally smaller classes in which they may produce better student outcomes and continue to develop. Some teachers might choose smaller classes for lower pay. Estimated Reach Extension Effect: Staying within average class sizes of countries with high graduation rates,* approximately 10%–40% more students with excellent teachers. For more on this model, see opportunityculture.org/reach/class-size-shifting-in-person/.

**MORE DETAIL:**

In this model, the opportunity to reach more students in a larger class is a privilege for the best teachers, and it comes with higher pay.

The benefit to students is very direct: More have excellent teachers. If shifting is done optimally, fewer students have ineffective teachers or novice teachers as well.

Schools with many excellent teachers may find this model useful for closing school performance gaps, while potentially enhancing the performance of teachers who are not yet producing top-tier results.

Any school can use this model in combination with other models to increase the number of students reached by excellent teachers and potentially to increase the performance of other teachers. New and developing teachers, as well as those who may be able to produce excellent results with smaller classrooms, benefit very directly in this model.

The number of students with which a teacher can produce the same excellent outcomes may vary by teacher and student characteristics. Some teachers will do well with smaller classrooms and later be able to add more students successfully. They will move along a clear career path based on simple metrics: student outcomes \( \times \) number of students reached. More sophisticated versions of this model might address differences among students. Students are placed into classes based on which teachers and classroom environments best fit their needs. Student-based budgeting, which ties higher pay to particular groups of students with higher needs, might enhance the appeal.

This model requires minimal changes at most in teaching roles, time use, technology use, and facilities.

**Role and Schedule Changes for Excellent Teachers:** Excellent teachers have larger class sizes. No role or schedule changes are required at the school level. Teachers may choose to manage their classroom time differently, depending on the number of students and how different their needs are.

**New Roles for Other Staff:** Some other teachers have classes with fewer students. Novice and struggling teachers have the chance to learn and develop while working with fewer students. Other teachers might also choose smaller classes, with proportionally lower pay, to reduce workload and after-school work hours. Once these teachers achieve consistently excellent student outcomes, they may choose to increase their impact by teaching more students for more pay.

When excellent teachers reach more students successfully, schools may be able to reduce the number of non-classroom instructional specialist positions that provide remedial and advanced

*The average teacher: student ratio of Japan and South Korea is approximately 1:34, which we use here as an outside limit.*
instruction. Some instructional specialists may be candidates for reach-extended teaching roles.

Optional positions may increase the number of students whom excellent teachers reach effectively. Tutors and teaching assistants may contribute to excellence, by following the lead of excellent teachers and playing supporting roles.

✱ Tutors may provide small-group and individual instruction at the direction of excellent teachers. Tutors may work in person or be remotely located when necessary.

✱ Teaching assistants may relieve excellent teachers of administrative work.

Impact on Students: Students who would not otherwise have excellent teachers benefit directly with higher learning progress and other improved outcomes. Students of other teachers who now have smaller classes also may benefit.

Scheduling Changes: None.

Pay Changes: Financial benefit accrues to classroom teachers who teach more students, produce excellent results, and are paid more from per-pupil funds. Teachers with smaller classes earn less.

If budgeting is student-based (students who require more time and resources are funded at a higher level), teachers also may be rewarded for teaching particular groups of students.

Cost Savings To Be Shared by Excellent Teachers and School: This model can be budget neutral. Financial benefit accrues to excellent teachers who teach more students and are paid more from per-pupil funds; teachers who teach fewer students are paid proportionally less. Cost savings may occur if some non-classroom specialist positions are no longer necessary.

Changes to Class/Group Size: Increases of 10% up to approximately 40%, with proportional decreases in other classes.

Facilities Changes: Some class-size increases can be handled within existing facilities, but would require reallocation of furniture (more tables or desks and chairs; fewer bookshelves and other materials permanently stored in classrooms). The largest class sizes may require larger classrooms.

Technology Needs: None.

Estimated Reach Effect Calculation Assumptions: The table below shows the class-size shifts from today’s average U.S. class size of 24 students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Shift (more/less than 24 students)</th>
<th>Increased # of Students Assigned to Excellent Teachers</th>
<th>Reduced # of Students Assigned to Other Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10% Shift</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% Shift</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33% Shift</td>
<td>32*</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% Shift</td>
<td>34*</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages are rounded; range here is 8%–42%. These are examples. Actual shifts can fall in between.

*The average teacher: student ratio of Japan and South Korea—two countries with high graduation rates—is approximately 1:34, which we use here as an outside limit.

CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS, AMONG OTHERS, INCLUDE:

✱ Will class-size limits be uniform, or will they be different for different teachers, based on their readiness to manage larger classes and the needs of students in each class?
  • If uniform, how many students will shift?
  • If not uniform, will there be outside limits on class sizes, or will this be decided on a case-by-case basis?

✱ Which teachers will have larger/smaller classrooms to achieve maximum benefit for children?
  • Larger: Consider at least past results and strength of classroom management skills.
  • Smaller: Consider new teachers; struggling teachers; solid, experienced teachers who would prefer fewer students and a lighter workload; and others who may do well with a smaller class.

✱ Which students will shift from other classes into proven excellent teachers’ classrooms?
  • Which students will benefit most from available top teachers? From smaller classes with solid teachers? Consider the differing populations and needs of students who are struggling, advanced, learning English, or who have special needs.
• Consider the overall student mix in both the larger and smaller classrooms and the demonstrated strengths of available teachers with students who have different needs.

➤ How will pay change for teachers with larger and smaller classrooms? What portion of pay will be contingent on student outcomes? How will midyear departures and entry of students affect pay?

➤ Do differing class sizes affect the allocation of teacher aides (elementary) or other resource staff?

➤ What, if any, changes in facilities are necessary?

➤ How will the change be communicated to staff and other stakeholders to convey the value of both larger and smaller classes?

➤ What changes in policies and practices related to hiring, retention, dismissal, professional development, leadership, and teacher evaluation are needed?

**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

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