

CAREER PATHS AND PAY IN AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

BY PUBLIC IMPACT

What if all teachers could achieve excellent student learning results—by getting the right leadership and support? Opportunity Culture Multi-Classroom Leadership and Multi-School Leadership make this possible.

To reach more students with excellent instruction, multi-classroom leaders (MCLs) lead small teams of teachers, and multi-school leaders (MSLs) lead small teams of principals. MCLs and MSLs are paid more, within their schools' regular budgets, and are selected for their record of leadership and excellence in achieving high-growth student learning. They lead collaboratively, so each team member's strengths help the whole team, and everyone learns together. Schedule changes give them school-day time to collaborate with, guide, and develop their teams. (See "Opportunity Culture Principles," page 3.)

Research has shown that teachers who were on average at the 50th percentile in student learning gains, who then joined small MCL teams, produced student growth matching or approaching that of excellent teachers, on average.¹

To help all students reach their potential, district and other system leaders must ensure that every student has consistent access to excellent teaching and leadership through Multi-Classroom and Multi-School Leadership. Teachers and principals benefit from more support and career opportunities, while helping students learn more. Teachers on some MCLs' teams also extend their reach directly to more students, with extra paraprofessional support, earning more pay and making it easier for schools to schedule teacher collaboration time. Everyone learns more and has opportunities to earn more, and more professionals impact students directly. This is an Opportunity Culture for *all*.

This guide presents an overview and examples of Opportunity Culture career paths, with a focus on details about *teacher* career paths, including multi-classroom leaders and other roles. It also explains the basics of how schoolwide leadership career paths and residencies fit into the overall education career continuum in Opportunity Culture schools—for more details on these, see the Opportunity Culture publications on [Multi-School Leadership](#) and [paid residencies](#). In all of these paths, teachers and principals reach more students with excellent teaching and earn more for it, within schools' budgets.

Each district and school must, with significant educator input, go through the right steps and financial analyses to design pay and career paths that fit its values and the funding available to each school. See more on [OpportunityCulture.org](#).

Why do students need consistent, excellent teaching?

Research confirms that without excellent teaching consistently, students who start behind stay behind. Even hardworking teachers who achieve one full year of learning growth with their students each year leave achievement gaps intact. By providing all students with excellent teaching consistently—and getting student growth like that from teachers in today's top 25 percent, who achieve well over one year of learning growth—schools can close gaps fast.² But with traditional school staffing plans, few students achieve enough growth to catch up and leap ahead.

How can far more students have access to excellent teaching?

* **Recruit.** Recruiting people with the potential to be great teachers is important, but the U.S. economy provides many career options—often for higher pay. Recruiting alone is not enough.

* **Develop and Extend.** Most teachers and principals today work alone. Excellent teachers rarely have the authority, time, or sustained, fair compensation to lead while teaching. Solid teachers have few chances to learn on the job from peers who produce higher-growth student learning and stronger critical thinking skills. Principals do not have enough time to lead and develop teachers in dozens of classrooms. To ensure that every student has access to excellent teaching consistently, districts must help excellent teachers and principals extend their reach to more students, primarily by leading small teams. These teams must have time to collaborate during school hours, so that teachers and principals learn to excel together—and help more students excel.

* **Retain.** To retain more educators, districts and states must provide more collaboration and support for educators to excel at work—

and more on-the-job development leading to higher-paid career advancement opportunities for more people (see Figure 1).

In short, district leaders must establish an “Opportunity Culture” for students, teachers, and principals.

OPPORTUNITY CULTURE ROLES: HOW THEY HELP

First, when schools add multi-classroom leaders, research has shown that whole teams of teachers can achieve growth like or approaching that of the best teachers. Multi-classroom leaders fully lead small teams—determining roles, leading lesson creation, improving instruction with data, and coaching teachers on the job—while continuing to teach part of the time. Teachers collaborate on MCL teams, and everyone learns to teach more effectively, together. MCLs are accountable for achieving high-growth learning with the whole team’s students.

Second, some teachers on an MCL’s team are **team teachers**; they collaborate to provide outstanding teaching to the team’s

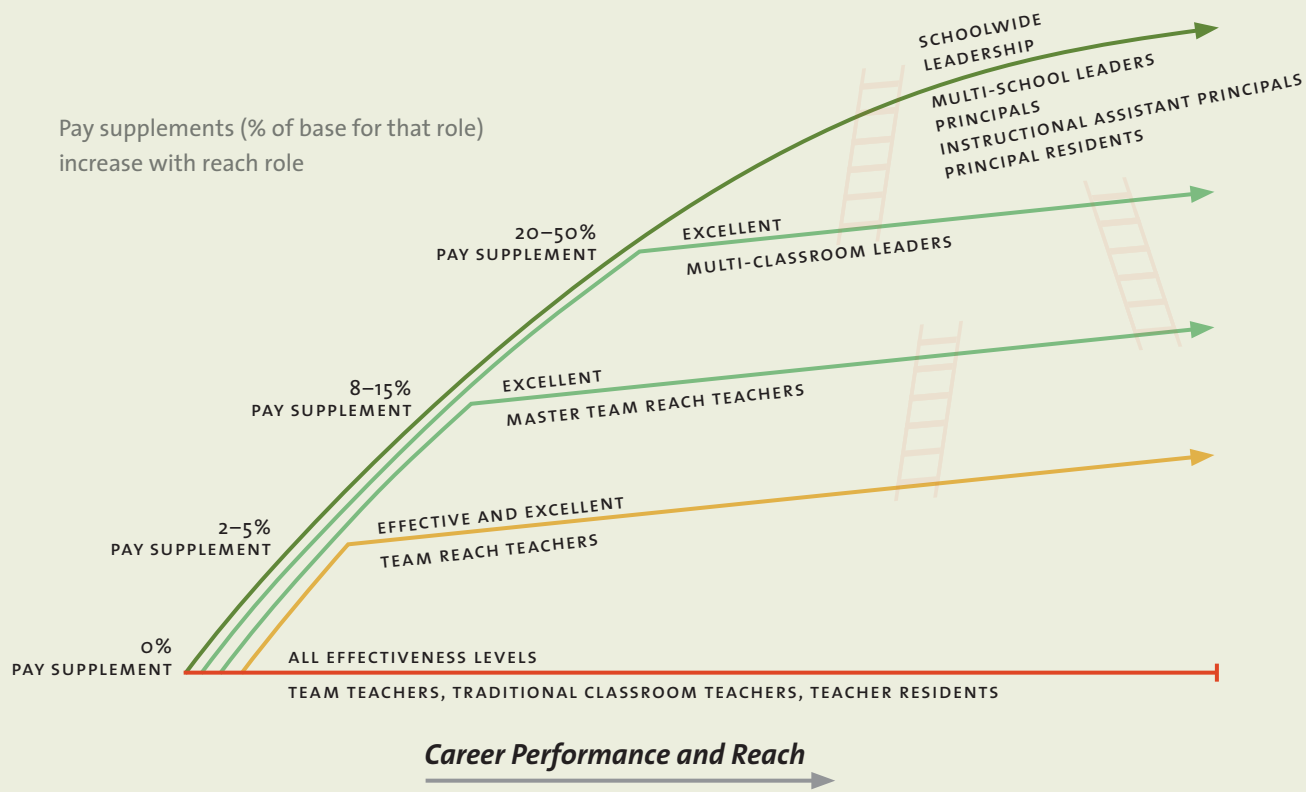
students with the MCL’s guidance. They do not extend their reach directly to more students, and thus do not typically earn a pay supplement.

On some MCL teams, school design teams (which include teachers) may choose for one or all teachers on each team to be “**team reach teachers**.” These teachers reach more students directly, by rotating students through paraprofessional support—from teaching assistants known as “**reach associates**,” **tutors**, **lab monitors**, **and/or teaching residents**—for part of the day (elementary) or in some class periods (secondary).

Elementary team reach teachers may reach more students directly with team reach by specializing in their best subjects, and both elementary and secondary team reach teachers may use limited, age-appropriate digital instruction and assessments.

A team of elementary team reach teachers reaches about 33 percent more students, on average, than a grade with the same number of teachers typically does. In secondary schools, each team

FIGURE 1.
Opportunity Culture: Whole Careers’ Worth of Learning, Advancement, and Pay Opportunity



*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of average pay.

reach teacher reaches about 50 percent more students overall, on average, than teachers typically do. We recommend no more than 50 percent extra reach overall in secondary schools, preserving some class periods for extra planning and review of student work.

By swapping some certified positions for extra paraprofessional support, schools can pay team reach teachers a supplement for reaching more students.

“**Master team reach teachers**” are team reach teachers who achieve high learning growth consistently and who also do one or both of the following: help an MCL lead a larger team; reach *far* more students directly with high-growth learning. Districts may have a career path within Team Reach and Master Team Reach levels to reward continued performance and commitment to these team roles.

Team reach enables:

- * easier scheduling of teacher collaboration
- * saving money for higher pay, when vacant positions are traded for extra paraprofessional support
- * a paid career path for more teachers
- * more instruction leading to high growth for students
- * more student learning time in small groups.

Third, districts can reach more students and teachers with great leadership by allowing excellent principals to lead small groups of schools as multi-school leaders. MSs earn more within their schools’ budgets, while developing other principals on the job. Everyone learns to lead better, together. MSs are accountable for achieving high-growth learning in all their schools.

Finally, aspiring teachers and principals can learn more and earn more in paid, full-year residencies when serving on the teams of multi-classroom leaders or multi-school leaders.

With these changes, collaboration and the pursuit of excellence become the norm in each school, day in and day out, and everyone improves—together. Students *and* educators benefit.

OPPORTUNITY CULTURE CAREER PATHS

Typical “career advancement” pushes teachers and principals into roles without much real authority, accountability, direct student impact, development opportunity, or permanent, large pay supplements.

In contrast, an Opportunity Culture provides many opportunities connected to students and continued support for teachers and principals. Figure 1 shows the possibilities when districts and schools design Opportunity Culture career paths, in which all teachers and principals have career opportunities that build their professional competence and maximize their positive impact on student learning. As they advance in an Opportunity Culture,

FIGURE 2. Opportunity Culture Instruction & Leadership Path

Teachers progress by achieving student learning growth, reaching more students in teams, and leading colleagues to help everyone excel collaboratively.

Principals progress by achieving student learning growth, reaching more schools with a team, and leading teachers and other principals to help everyone excel collaboratively.

Level	Role
15	Superintendent
14	Assistant Superintendent*
13	Executive Multi-School Leader*
12	Multi-School Leader II
11	Multi-School Leader I
10	Principal
9	Assistant Principal and/or Principal Resident
8	Multi-Classroom Leader II
7	Multi-Classroom Leader I
6	Master Team Reach Teacher II
5	Master Team Reach Teacher I
4	Team Reach Teacher II
3	Team Reach Teacher I
2	Team Teacher
1	Classroom Teacher
0	Teacher Resident

*These roles may have multiple levels.

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

teachers and principals reach more students, for more pay. Supplements for multi-classroom leaders have averaged approximately 20 percent of teacher pay, for example. New roles let teachers use their instructional mastery while developing their teamwork and

leadership skills, and let all teachers learn on the job. Principals learn to lead teacher-leaders with the support of colleagues and a multi-school leader. Aspiring teachers and principals learn from the best on the job.

FIGURE 3. Opportunity Culture Teaching Role Summaries and Levels

Role Summary	Example Levels and Qualifications
<p>Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads small teaching team while continuing to teach, typically part of the time. Ultimately responsible for organizing the roles, steps and elements of the team’s curriculum, lessons, teaching, data analysis, and improvement; coaches and develops team. Earns a pay supplement. 	<p>MCL II—Leads team of 6–8 teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track record of leadership and high-growth student learning as MCL I. <p>MCL I—Leads team of 2–5 teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track record of leadership and high-growth student learning.
<p>Team Reach Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches on a team led by a multi-classroom leader, collaborating with colleagues. Extends reach to more students directly (“team reach”), usually on a rotating schedule with paraprofessional help for part of the day. May use limited-quantity, age-appropriate blended learning and/or, in elementary schools, specialize by subject(s). May have a more specific title, such as: expanded-impact teacher, blended-learning teacher, or elementary subject specialist. Note: Some districts use these titles only for master team reach teachers. May have two levels (e.g., TRT I and II; MRT I and II), based on continued performance and commitment to team role. Earns a pay supplement funded by reach. 	<p>Master Team Reach Teacher (MRT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to Team Reach Teacher duties, does one or both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists MCL II with leadership of large team; Reaches far more students than other teachers (more class periods in secondary school; more students in elementary). Track record of high-growth student learning. May have two levels (MRT I and II). <p>Team Reach Teacher (TRT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New teachers and experienced teachers with track record of “effective” rating, at least. May have two levels (TRT I and TRT II).
<p>Team Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches on a team led by a multi-classroom leader, collaborating with colleagues 	<p>Team Teacher (one level only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New teachers and experienced teachers with track record of “effective” rating, at least. Does not extend reach or earn a pay supplement.

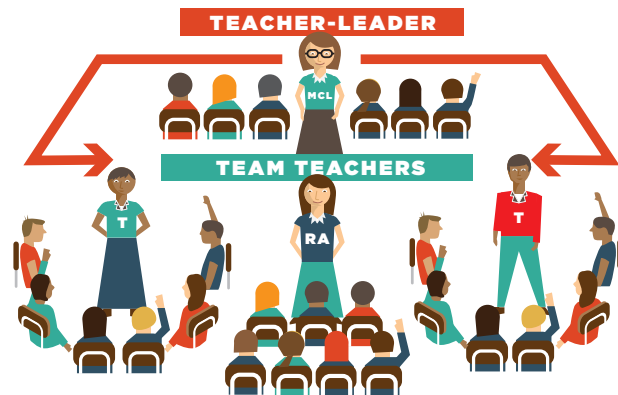
FIGURE 4. Opportunity Culture Snapshots

The cornerstone of an Opportunity Culture is Multi-Classroom Leadership: small, collaborative teaching teams led by teachers with leadership skills and a record of high-growth student learning. Some or all of the teachers on a multi-classroom leader's team may be "team reach teachers," meaning they directly reach more students with support from paraprofessionals or teacher residents. Multi-classroom leaders have significant autonomy to craft the role responsibilities and collaborative team processes necessary to produce strong student learning. Schools change schedules to allow extra planning and team collaboration time. Districts establish role pay and career paths that are sustainable for schools with different funding levels.



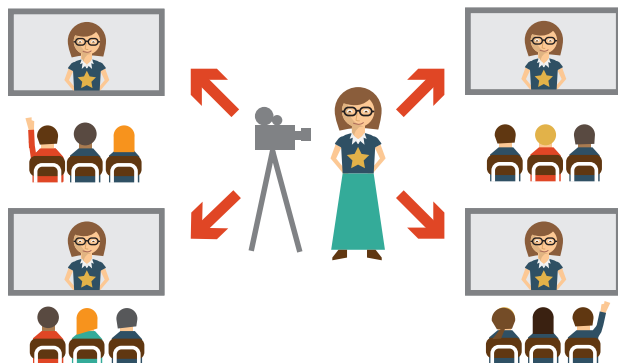
MULTI-CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP: THE ESSENTIAL MODEL

A multi-classroom leader (MCL) is a teacher with leadership skills and a record of high-growth student learning who both teaches part of the time and leads a small, collaborative team of teachers for a group of classrooms in the same grade or subject. MCLs share and collaboratively improve instructional strategies and their most effective practices for classroom success. Teaching teams collaborate and plan together through careful scheduling and, in some cases, supervision of students by paraprofessionals ("reach associates") or teaching residents. Accountable for achieving high growth for all the team's classrooms, the MCL determines how students spend time and tailors team teachers' roles according to their strengths.



TEAM REACH

Team reach teachers on a multi-classroom leader's team directly teach more students than usual, but typically without raising instructional group sizes. Students rotate among teachers and paraprofessionals ("reach associates") or teacher residents, who may tutor individuals and small groups and supervise skills practice, project work, and limited, age-appropriate digital instruction. Teachers use their face-to-face teaching time for higher-order learning and personalized follow-up, often using small-group instruction. In elementary schools, teacher may specialize by subject. Teachers with prior, consistently high growth may assume an advanced role as a master team reach teacher, to assist a multi-classroom leader with a larger team and/or to reach significantly more students than other teachers.



REMOTELY LOCATED TEACHING

When schools face a persistent scarcity of teachers in subjects, particularly in secondary schools, teams may include remotely located teachers. Remotely located teachers use technology to provide live, but not in-person, instruction. They teach students served and supervised by school-based teachers and staff, who typically are on a team led by a multi-classroom leader. Some MCLs in schools may lead a team of all or mostly remotely located teachers, typically in schools that are very hard to staff. Remote teachers also may have a remotely located multi-classroom leader (MCL) who leads a team of remotely located teachers serving many geographically dispersed schools and students. MCLs monitor and improve instruction collaboratively across the team, including both on-site and remotely located teachers, schools, and students.

FIGURE 5. Opportunity Culture Teacher Career Path Example

This shows an example of a teacher career path in an Opportunity Culture district. Teachers teach on small teams led by multi-classroom leaders (MCLs). Each school determines role specifics and how many of each position are available per school, based on instructional needs and financial constraints.

Team teachers teach and collaborate on an MCL's team. In addition, on some MCL teams, team *reach* teachers extend their reach to more students directly, with paraprofessional help. Advanced teachers who extend reach directly on an MCL's team may be called master team reach teachers (see page 4 for details). Some districts use other titles for team reach and/or master team reach teachers, such as expanded-impact teacher, blended-learning teacher, or elementary subject specialist. Additional roles, such as paraprofessional reach associates, tutors, teaching assistants, and teacher residents may support some teams.

Most districts pay supplements only to *teachers who reach more students*, either as multi-classroom leaders or as team/master team reach teachers. A small portion of districts pay supplements to other staff. Pay supplements below are examples and are expressed as a percent of average pay; districts should set dollar supplement levels to help schols plan their budgets.

Level	Minimum Experience	Qualifications (Q) & Performance (P)	Pay Supplement*
Multi-Classroom Leader II (MCL II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads teaching team of 6–8 teachers while continuing to teach, typically part of the time. Ultimately responsible for organizing the roles, steps and elements of the team's curriculum, lessons, teaching, data analysis, and improvement; coaches and develops team. May have one or two MRTs to assist with leadership and direct reach. <i>Funded by reallocation of instructional support staff and/or by team efficiency/reach.</i> 	2-3 years as MCL I	Q: Excellent rating/high growth in 2 of 3 years as MCL I. Leadership competencies demonstrated P: Maintains excellent rating/high growth in 2 of 3 years as MCL	30–50%
Multi-Classroom Leader I (MCL I) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads teaching team of 2–5 teachers while teaching, typically part of the time. Ultimately responsible for organizing the roles, steps and elements of the team's curriculum, lessons, teaching, data analysis, and improvement; coaches and develops team. <i>Funded by reallocation of instructional support staff and/or by team efficiency/reach.</i> 	3 years as Teacher, Team Teacher, or Team Reach Teacher	Q: Excellent rating/high growth in 2 of 3 years as teacher, team teacher or team reach teacher. Leadership competencies demonstrated P: Maintains excellent rating/high growth in 2 of 3 years as MCL	20–30%
Master Team Reach Teacher I and II (MRT I and II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extends reach to more students directly on an MCL-led team. In addition to Team Reach Teacher duties, does one or both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists MCL II with leadership of large team (such as by coaching other teachers); Reaches far more students than other teachers (more class periods in secondary school; more students in elementary). Uses highly advanced instructional skills, such as advanced planning and student data analysis, and/or extra differentiation. <i>Funded by team or individual efficiency/reach.</i> 	MRT II: 3 years as a MRT I MRT I: 3 years as Teacher, Team Teacher, or Team Reach Teacher	Q MRT II: Excellent rating/high growth in 2 of 3 prior years as an MRT I Q MRT I: Excellent rating/high growth in 2 of 3 prior years P: MRT I and II: Maintains excellent rating/high growth in 2 of 3 years in MRT role	8–15%
Team Reach Teacher I and II (TRT I and II) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of an MCL-led team, extends reach to more students directly, usually on a rotating schedule with paraprofessional help for part of the day. Uses basic to advanced instructional skills. May use limited-quantity, age-appropriate blended learning and/or, in elementary schools, specialize by subject(s). <i>Funded by team or individual efficiency/reach.</i> 	TRT II: 3 years as Team Reach Teacher TRT I: None required	Q TRT II: Proficient/Effective rating or above in 2 of 3 years as TRT I Q TRT I: Certification, or in-progress P: Maintains Proficient/Effective rating or above	2–5%
Team Teacher (TT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches on a team led by a multi-classroom leader, collaborating with colleagues. 	None required	Q: Certification, or in-progress P: Maintains Proficient/Effective or above	None

*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of average pay in a district.

**Some team-reach teachers have specific titles: blended-learning teacher; expanded-impact teacher; or elementary specialist; also, secondary school team-reach teachers may be paid based on the number of periods in which each extends reach.

COMPENSATION IN AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE

Districts must determine how many levels of differentiated responsibility and pay they will offer on a teacher career path.

- * In a **flat** structure, only one level of multi-classroom leaders receives a supplement. “Career paths” would not really be paths, but one additional role (see Figure 6).
- * In a **modestly differentiated** structure, one level of multi-classroom leadership and one level of team reach, such as the master team reach role, receives a supplement. Or, two levels of multi-classroom leadership may be recognized (see Figures 7a and b).
- * In a **more differentiated** structure, two levels of multi-classroom leadership and two levels of team reach might be recognized (see Figure 8).
- * In a **highly differentiated** career structure, there are levels for different reach roles, leadership spans, effectiveness levels, and years of experience and success on teams that demonstrate commitment to working in an Opportunity Culture —offering the potential to reach the most staff members with extra pay for reaching more students with excellent teaching in teams (see Figure 9).

All supplements are funded by reallocating instructional support roles and/or trading in vacant positions on teaching teams to extend teachers’ reach, and/or other savings.

FIGURE 6. Flat Career Structure

Role	Example Supplement of Average Pay*
Multi-Classroom Leader	25% of average pay
All Other Teachers	0%

FIGURE 7a. Modestly Differentiated Structure

Role	Example Supplement of Average Pay*
Multi-Classroom Leader	25%
Master Team Reach Teacher**	12%
All Other Teachers	0%

FIGURE 7b. Modestly Differentiated Structure—2 MCL Levels

Role	Example Supplement of Average Pay*
Multi-Classroom Leader II	35%
Multi-Classroom Leader I	25%
All Other Teachers	0%

FIGURE 8. More Differentiated Structure

Role	Example Supplement of Average Pay*
Multi-Classroom Leader II	35%
Multi-Classroom Leader I	25%
Master Team Reach Teacher**	12%
Team Reach Teacher**	3%
All Other Teachers	0%

FIGURE 9. Highly Differentiated Structure

Role	Example Supplement of Average Pay*
Multi-Classroom Leader II	35%
Multi-Classroom Leader I	25%
Master Team Reach Teacher II**	15%
Master Team Reach Teacher I**	8%
Team Reach Teacher II	5%
Team Reach Teacher I	2%
Classroom Teacher	0%

*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of **average pay**.

**Includes blended-learning, expanded-impact, and specialized elementary teachers.

When schools and districts create these new career paths, they create the key elements of the Opportunity Culture virtuous cycle, because sustainably higher pay and advancement opportunities attract more great candidates, help all teachers excel by learning on the job, retain great teachers (of whom there will be many more because of the on-the-job support and development), and let schools hire more selectively (see Figure 10, page 8).

FIGURE 10. Opportunity Culture Virtuous Cycle



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Notes

1. Teachers who were on average at the 50th percentile in student learning gains, who then joined teams led by teacher-leaders known as multi-classroom leaders, or 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 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. 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/>; and Hassel, E. A., & Hassel, B. C. (2018, February 12.) Analysis: New study finds huge student learning gains in schools where teachers mentor their colleagues as multi-classroom leaders [Blog post]. The 74. Retrieved from <https://www.the74million.org/article/analysis-new-study-finds-huge-student-learning-gains-in-schools-where-teachers-mentor-their-colleagues-as-multi-classroom-leaders/>

2. Hassel, B. C., & Hassel, E. A. (2010). Opportunity at the top: How America's best teachers could close the gaps, raise the bar, and keep our nation great. Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact. Retrieved from http://www.opportunityculture.org/images/stories/opportunity_at_the_top-public_impact.pdf

