

# Multi-School Leadership: Introduction



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# Many Challenges with Principalship

- **Principals lack training and support** to achieve their potential
  - **Little preparation and experience leading**
  - **Principal supervisors spread too thin, and too removed** from daily school leadership to really help
  - **Leadership is lonely:** Little to no peer guidance and support
- **Principal time wasted** on operations and administration—little time to lead instruction and a schoolwide culture of excellence
- **No well-paid career path** staying close to teachers and students
- **Not enough excellent principals for high growth in all schools**



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See slide.

[Alternative: Ask audience to think of problems they perceive with principal and principal supervisor roles. Then reveal slide.]

A typical span for principal supervisors now varies widely: 12 per supervisor has been recommended in several districts in recent years, but double, triple, and more are not uncommon. (See [A New Role Emerges for Principal Supervisors: Evidence from Six Districts in the Principal Supervisor Initiative; Principal Supervisor Network Design Toolkit](#))

Surveys show principals say they lack the guidance and support they need, and value support for instructional leadership highly. A 2015 RAND survey of principals found that less than a third of principals surveyed indicated that their district provided a combination of regular supervisory communication, mentoring, and at least a day of professional development. (See <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Support-for-Instructional-Leadership.pdf>)

# A New Vision

## What if...

- **Every school** had an excellent principal in charge of instruction
- Great principals had a well-paid school leadership **career path**
- **All principals:**
  - Led instructional teams for **many years as teacher-leaders**
  - Were **led by an excellent principal** before becoming one
  - Worked with a **team of principals** to attain high growth
- Principals spent **little time on noninstructional management**
- Principals spent **far more time leading excellent instruction**
- Many principals produced **high-growth learning**, consistently

# How: Multi-School Leadership

## Multi-School Leaders (MSLs) Are Excellent Principals Who...

**Lead**  
2 – 8 schools

**Earn**  
more pay

**Use regular**  
**school budgets**  
for higher pay

**Guide and develop**  
principals  
as a team  
& individually

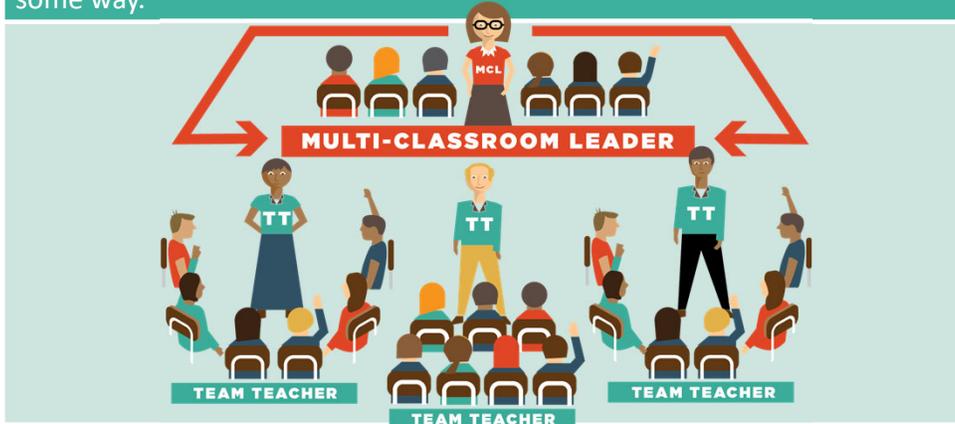
**Take**  
**accountability**  
for outcomes in all  
schools led

See slide.

# The Foundation: Schoolwide MCLs

## Schoolwide Multi-Classroom Leadership supports principals and their MSL

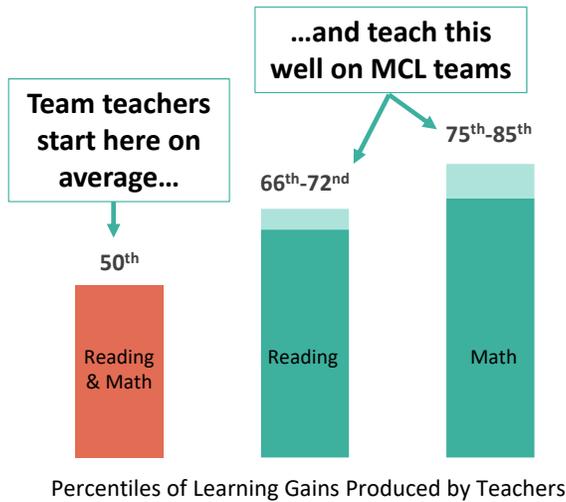
Multi-classroom leaders (MCLs) lead small, collaborative grade or subject teams of 2–8 teachers. The school's team of MCLs collaborates with the principal to achieve excellence schoolwide. MCLs teach part of the time in some way.



See slide.

# Strong Gains for Multi-Classroom Leader Teams

Teachers on MCL teams produced gains equal to top-quartile teachers in math, nearly that in reading.



## Scope of the Study

- 15,000 students
- 300 teachers
- 3 districts, 2–3 years
- 74% of schools Title I
- Study meets ESSA Evidence Level 2, a rare level of rigor

Backes, B., & Hansen, M. (2018). *Reaching Further and Learning More?* CALDER Center: Washington, DC. Reading range based on 6 of 7 models with statistically significant gains.

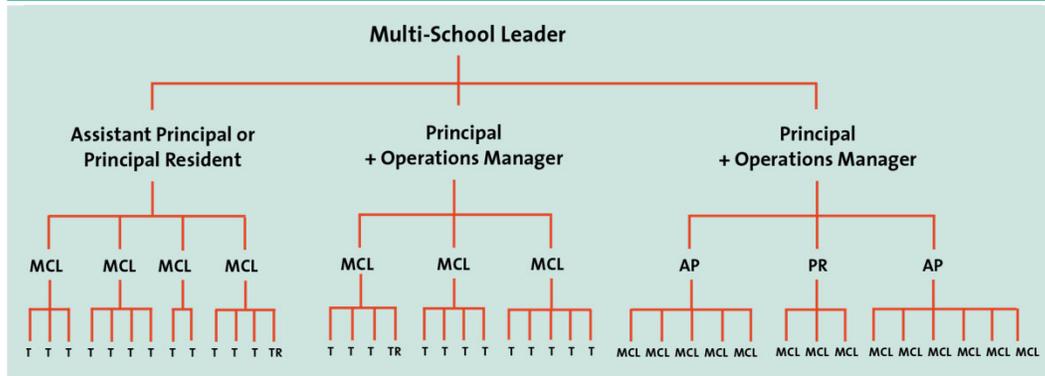
Third-party research shows that multi-classroom leaders, on average, significantly raise student growth produced by whole teams of teachers. MCL-led teams move *from average* student growth *to growth the same as or approaching that of top* teachers.

MCLs also form a team across each school to co-lead schoolwide culture and instruction with the principal.

# Operations Managers: Noninstructional Leaders

**Operations managers focus on logistical, administrative and building services**

Operations managers are not certified staff, and the pay is lower, aligned with human services office managers. Schools swap one assistant principal position for this position, which saves money for per-school multi-school leader pay supplements and focuses instructional leaders on teachers and students.



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Most schools add an operations manager instead of an assistant principal. Large schools might have both.

The important thing is that professionals certified to provide instruction no longer waste time on noninstructional management.

The principal and remaining APs can focus on leading instruction and a schoolwide culture of excellence.

And swapping an AP for an operations manager saves money to pay for Multi-School Leadership within school budgets, making Multi-School Leadership scalable district-wide without special funding.

# Supporting Roles

**A multi-school leader (MSL) leads a multi-school team to achieve excellence. Each of an MSL's schools will have one or more of these roles:**

- **Principal:** Lead schoolwide instructional excellence through MCL team, with support of operations manager and, in large schools, assistant principals and residents
- **Assistant Principal/Principal Resident:** Lead one school directly under MSL, or lead part of large school under principal; lead MCL team
- **Operations Manager:** Lead noninstructional functions (transportation, building, scheduling, etc.) in collaboration with instructional leaders

Here is more clarity about roles when using Multi-School Leadership.

Each school has at least one schoolwide instructional leader: the principal, assistant principal, or principal resident. The multi-school leader typically continues to lead one school, or sometimes two, directly—acting as the senior instructional leader with the help of an instructional AP or principal resident.

MSLs rotate working in person in the schools they lead, connecting personally with teachers, staff, and families.

The operations manager, who does not require certification, handles noninstructional school operations and administration.

## MSL vs. Principal Supervisor Role

Multi-School Leaders	Typical Principal Supervisors*
<b>Lead 2 – 8 schools</b>	<b>Lead dozens of schools</b>
<b>Continue to lead one school directly</b>	<b>Do not continue to lead a school directly</b>
<b>Lead a team of principals supported by multi-classroom leaders</b>	<b>Lead principals who have a nearly impossible job</b>
<b>Support principals' focus on instructional excellence</b>	<b>Scramble to support schools unable to focus on instructional leadership</b>
<b>Provide structure for paid residencies</b>	<b>Provide no mechanism for paid residencies</b>

In large districts, MSLs may also report to a principal supervisor funded at the district level.

\*Also called area, zone and community superintendents, among other titles



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Here are some of the ways multi-school leaders differ from typical principal supervisor roles (such as area/assistant superintendents, learning community superintendents, academic innovation officers).

- An MSL leads just two to eight schools, allowing intensive leadership and coaching—not the dozens of schools of a typical supervisor, who has time for only light-touch leadership.
- An MSL continues to lead one school directly—so instead of losing connection to teachers and students and having instructional leadership skills grow stale, an MSL stays close to teachers, students, and keeps skills fresh.
- An MSL leads a team of principals who are supported by multi-classroom leaders. Typical supervisors lead principals who have a nearly impossible job of leading 20 to 50 teachers directly, driving their work hours up without producing results for students. But MSLs lead principals who get MCL support, freeing their time to lead their instructional vision in the school and ensure that teachers are supported.
- MSLs can support their principals' focus on instructional excellence by adding operations managers, so that principals can lead instruction and create a school culture that supports students' overall development. In contrast, typical supervisors lead principals who must scramble to support all aspects of their school, squandering instructional leadership potential, and swamping their time and attention with noninstructional tasks.
- Finally, unlike typical supervisor roles, Multi-School Leadership provides a structure for paid principal residencies.

Note that a multi-school leader might report to a principal supervisor funded at the district level, now called an “executive multi-school leader.”

Everyone keeps smaller spans, so that each leader can be really helpful in guiding and supporting excellent instruction and leadership, rather than doing too little for too many people.

Everyone learns and grows faster on the job.

## 3 Steps to Fund 10–40% MSL Pay Supplement, Within Budget

- 1. Keep the MSL as the direct leader of one school**, in most cases, to fund the MSL's base pay (before the MSL supplement).
  - In that case, an instructional AP or principal resident, who is paid less than a principal, reports directly to the MSL.
- 2. Each school converts an assistant principal (AP) position** to a lower-paid operations manager; saves 15–30% of AP pay per school.\*
- 3. The MSL supplement accrues from the total cost savings at all these schools.**

\*School MSL continues leading directly may not make this same change; or may share an OM with neighboring school in the MSL team.



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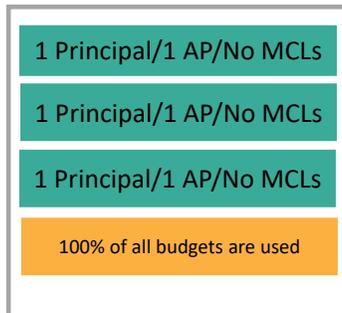
Here is more detail about Multi-School Leadership pay and budgeting:

- Multi-school leaders can earn supplements above principal pay—10 to 40 percent of average principal pay is well within most budgets—depending on the number of schools they lead and local costs of human service organization office managers.
- All pay supplements are funded within the total budgets of the schools in the group.
- When a school swaps an assistant principal position for an operations manager position, it saves an estimated 15 to 30 percent of the AP pay, on average.
- Schools that have no principal, just an AP or principal resident—paid on the AP schedule and reporting directly to the multi-school leader, in one or two schools in the multi-school group—save even more funds. These savings all go into a pool that funds a pay supplement for the multi-school leader, which increases with the number of schools led.

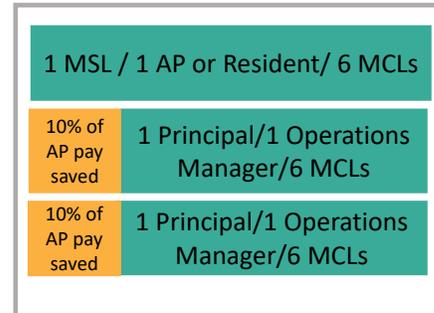
## Example

### ***Funding MSL Pay Supplement, Within Budget***

3 Schools Before



Same 3 Schools After



- MSL pay funded by swapping assistant principals for operations managers
- Most APs become principals or MCLs, or remain as AP in large schools.

- For example, a pay supplement of 10 percent (of average principal pay) for leading two schools, and 7.5–10 percent more for each additional school led, fits well within the estimated savings. These levels of pay also fit into a natural sequence of small-team leadership from the classroom up through the superintendency. No leader is left struggling to lead large numbers of teachers or schools. And no professional is left without guidance and support to excel at work.
- The operations manager position, which does not require certification or instructional training, is on a different pay schedule commensurate with local human service office managers. In some cases, this may open a career path for highly organized teaching assistants and reach associates who have demonstrated strong organizational and logistical prowess by supporting large teaching teams and through other school activities.

# Opportunity Culture Principles

## **OPPORTUNITY CULTURE PRINCIPLES:**

### **For Principals Extending Their Reach as Multi-School Leaders**

*Teams of principals and district/network leaders must tailor roles, budgets, and school operations to:*

1. Reach more schools with excellent principals and their teams
2. Pay principals 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 —throughout all of the multi-school leader's schools
5. Match authority and accountability to each person's responsibilities

In addition, research indicates that keeping multi-school teams small will improve outcomes.

Multi-School Leadership follows the Opportunity Culture Principles—parallel to the Principles you may have seen for teacher and multi-classroom leader roles.

## Opportunity Culture Career Path Example

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



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Paid career advancement completely within school budgets becomes possible with Opportunity Culture roles.

This shows where the multi-school leader role fits into the career continuum.

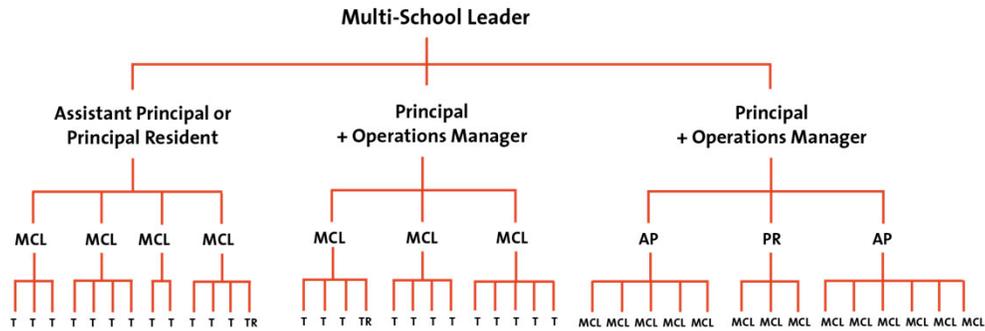
Multi-school leaders can advance by leading a larger span of schools. With more swaps of operations managers for assistant principals, funds are freed to pay more for larger spans, aiming for an average of 5–6 schools led per MSL.

Districts can enhance MSL pay further, if desired, for example by allocating more funding to higher-poverty schools and the MSLs who lead zones of them—separate from other funding sources described here. All must fit into a continuum of roles and pay within each district.

Notice how paid teacher and principal residencies also fit within budget when using Multi-Classroom and Multi-School Leadership.

A culture of on-the-job learning starts right at the beginning for educators in an Opportunity Culture.

# Opportunity Culture Throughout a District



- Multi-classroom leaders (MCLs) lead teams of teachers, team reach teachers, and/or teacher residents...
- Principals, or APs/principal residents working closely with multi-school leader, each lead their school's team of MCLs...
- And a multi-school leader leads the principals.
- All take accountability for outcomes of the teams they lead.

This is a simple explanation of how Opportunity Culture fits together, from teacher residencies through multi-school leadership, to provide learning and leadership excellence for all. The elements include:

- Paid residencies for aspiring teachers
- Multi-Classroom Leadership to support all teachers and teacher residents
- Paid residencies for aspiring principals
- Multi-School Leadership to support all principals and principal residents



These are the locations of Opportunity Culture currently.

These districts have led the way in establishing Multi-Classroom Leadership and other advanced teaching roles.

- The next steps for each district:
- adding Multi-School Leadership to support principals
  - and paid teacher and principal residencies to support people moving into new educator roles.

## What Can States and Districts Do?

- **Make the Opportunity Culture Commitment**
- **Fund planning, implementation, and training:**
  - Tap streams including Title I, Title II, state \$\$
  - Fund only the costs of transition to Opportunity Culture, *not* pay supplements, which are funded by school budgets
  - Use funding power to ensure schoolwide MCLs and addition of MSLS by year 3 of implementation per district
- **Remove policy barriers:** categorical funding, class-size limits (allowing student supervision by teacher-led paraprofessionals), growth score calculations
- **Analyze and elevate:** gather data, analyze outcomes, foster networks to improve, and scale up to serve all

- The first step is to make the Opportunity Culture Commitment:
  - To reach *all students* with excellent teaching, consistently
  - And to provide all educators with outstanding career opportunities, to learn and to advance when ready.
- Do this by using Multi-Classroom Leadership and Multi-School Leadership, consistently.
- Some other steps are needed to do this at scale, noted in the slide's last two bullets: clear policy barriers and analyze data to scale up and improve.

## Sources

An Excellent Principal for Every School:  
Transforming Schools Into Leadership Machines

[https://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/An\\_Excellent\\_Principal\\_for\\_Every\\_School-Public\\_Impact.pdf](https://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/An_Excellent_Principal_for_Every_School-Public_Impact.pdf)

Also see a full introduction to Opportunity Culture:

[https://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Intro\\_to\\_OC\\_Slide\\_Deck\\_with\\_Speaker\\_Notes-Public\\_Impact.pdf](https://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Intro_to_OC_Slide_Deck_with_Speaker_Notes-Public_Impact.pdf)

See other resources at [OpportunityCulture.org](https://OpportunityCulture.org)



## Thank You

Contact **Public Impact** to transform your schools into a high-growth Opportunity Culture:

<https://publicimpact.com/about-public-impact/contact-public-impact/>