

Opportunity Culture FAQs for Applicants

How did the Opportunity Culture concept begin?

In 2013, schools piloted the Opportunity Culture models created by Public Impact, a national education policy and management firm. Opportunity Culture models adhere to five principles, which call for teams of teachers and school leaders to choose and tailor structures 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.

Why did this district implement an Opportunity Culture?

We believe that the teacher in the classroom has the most impact on a student's performance, so we implemented Opportunity Culture as a way to recruit, retain, and reward excellent teachers. Teachers consistently say that they long to make more of an impact, have leadership opportunities that do not take them out of the classroom, and be paid commensurate with their level of responsibility and impact on students. Opportunity Culture addresses all of this. We also focus on supporting and developing our teachers, and an Opportunity Culture makes consistent, personalized, on-the-job, weekly or even daily support possible.

Which schools are participating?

The following schools have implemented an Opportunity Culture or are in the design process for implementing next year: Bessemer Elementary, Cone Elementary, Falkener Elementary, Ferndale Middle, Foust Elementary, Hairston Middle, Hampton Elementary, Jackson Middle, and Wiley Elementary.

Does every grade have multi-classroom leaders (MCLs) and team teachers?

Not necessarily, depending on the school. Each school has its own design team that decides what roles fit its needs best, such as MCLs, elementary subject-specializing teachers, and blended-learning teachers.

What is the selection process like?

We have a rigorous selection process that focuses on competencies, taking into account our mission and school fit. It includes a pre-screening that considers your submitted data that shows your record of success with student achievement, followed by interviews from leaders of a specific school.

How are these positions created within a school?

Opportunity Culture roles were chosen by a team of teachers and administrators at each school. Each school's design team chose and tailored the roles to fit the school.

How am I supported in these new roles?

Great support is a hallmark of Opportunity Culture schools. Multi-classroom leaders get intensive training before the school year begins and throughout the year in how to lead their teams, and all Opportunity Culture staff get on-the-job training and development, and scheduled, dedicated collaborative time for planning, coaching, and support.

Are these positions here to stay long-term?

Yes. Another hallmark of an Opportunity Culture is that the roles are sustainably funded through reallocating the school's budget, not through temporary grants. We believe these roles will be the new norm in education, and they continue to spread in other states as well. We believe these roles are best for students, providing them with a great education through well-supported, great teachers or teachers on a team led by a highly successful teacher—and we believe these roles are best for teachers and the teaching profession.

What does a day in the life of an MCL look like?

Busy and rewarding! An MCL's day may include direct instruction with students, co-teaching, coaching, modeling instruction for teachers, planning with teachers, and data analysis, observation, and feedback. MCLs are granted much schedule flexibility, but expected to plan their schedules carefully to focus on what will make the most impact on student achievement.

How am I evaluated as an MCL?

MCLs are responsible for the results of all the students on their team. They are evaluated under the state teacher evaluation along with an MCL-specific evaluation.

What does a day in the life of a team teacher look like?

A team teacher's day is similar to a typical classroom teacher's schedule, but with more collaborative planning and data analysis time—no more teaching in isolation, but a day full of support instead.

How am I evaluated as a team teacher?

Team teachers are evaluated under the state teacher evaluation.