

# MULTI-SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

## AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE MODEL: SUMMARY

BY PUBLIC IMPACT

**Opportunity Culture multi-school leaders (MSLs) are excellent principals with a record of high-growth student learning who lead a small group of two to eight related or closely located schools for more pay, funded within the budgets of their schools.**

**Multi-school leaders lead a team of their schools’ principals. In some cases, the team also includes an instructional assistant principal or principal resident who leads a school with heavier, more direct instructional leadership by the MSL.** The team reviews data for each school and for the schools overall to identify the best instructional, behavioral, and operational approaches to achieve student success. MSLs guide each school’s top instructional leader in key elements of instructional and administrative leadership, observe and give feedback, coach, and lead performance data analysis and problem-solving throughout the multi-school team. MSLs are accountable for student learning, teacher satisfaction, and other outcomes in all schools led.

**Each school has at least one schoolwide instructional leader:** principal, assistant principal (AP), or principal resident. The multi-school leader typically continues to directly lead at least one school—in some cases two—acting as its 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 cornerstone of multi-school leadership is instructional leadership within each school by multi-classroom leaders (MCLs).** MCLs are accountable teacher-leaders with a track record of high-growth student learning who lead small grade and subject teams. MCLs provide substantial guidance and support to their teams, while still teaching part of the time. MCLs work as a team to help principals lead instruction, behavior policies, and other critical activities affecting learning in each school. Research indicates that multi-classroom leadership helps teams of teachers produce substantially higher student learning growth than in typical schools.<sup>1</sup>

### Pay & Career Path

Multi-school leaders earn supplements above principal pay, typically 10 to 40 percent, depending on spans and budgets. All pay supplements are funded within the total budgets of the schools in the group.



### Purposes of Multi-School Leadership

- \* Reach more teachers and their students with excellent leadership
- \* Let outstanding principals advance with higher pay, while continuing to lead instructional excellence
- \* Help all principals and teachers continuously improve their leadership and instruction
- \* Retain principals longer by helping them handle the job well and succeed with students
- \* Build a strong pipeline of excellent instructional leaders, with a career path for development

### Role Changes

**MCLs’ schoolwide leadership lets schools reduce the number or level of schoolwide leadership positions** to fund multi-school leader pay, within schools’ budgets. In each school that retains a principal, one AP position is swapped for an operations manager. Large schools may swap just one assistant principal, keeping others, or residents, to guide and coach a portion of MCLs or lead other school functions. In some schools, an AP may become the top instructional leader, working directly under a multi-school leader rather than a principal.

**Multi-school leaders differ from most district leaders** (such as assistant superintendents and principal supervisors) both because of the small number of schools they lead—allowing intensive leadership and coaching—and because their team of principals is supported by multi-classroom leaders in each school.

1. 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/>