



## New Career Pathways for Syracuse Teachers Moving Toward a Profession Full of Opportunity

Imagine this: Schools where all teachers can improve their teaching and are rewarded for getting better. Imagine schools where teachers focus on their strengths and interests, and they have in-school time to plan and collaborate in teams. Imagine schools where teachers who achieve excellence can multiply their impact by giving more students access to their teaching, and they can lead peers while continuing to teach.

Imagine being part of a profession that attracts the best and the brightest to be your colleagues. Imagine a profession where teachers drive the instructional decisions in their classrooms and schools. Imagine teachers' power increasing in districts and the profession overall.

Imagine earning more for these contributions and leadership. And imagine a teaching profession with a reputation for developing and retaining great teachers through all of these opportunities. Rather than being burdened with conditions that sometimes make you wonder why you became a teacher, **what if teaching were so full of opportunities and outstanding peers that you enjoyed the challenge and always felt proud to teach?** What if your reputation were enhanced by being part of a selective, well-paid, high-performing profession critical to our nation's success?

In Syracuse, we call this an **Opportunity Culture**, because all teachers have career opportunities dependent upon their excellence, leadership, and student impact. All teachers and staff have the opportunity, in every role, to develop to their full potential through collaboration with and leadership from excellent teachers, where excellence will be defined not just by the formal evaluation but also by other key measures including the ability to work with and develop colleagues.

### SYRACUSE SCHOOL DESIGNS IN AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE

To create an Opportunity Culture that helps far more students excel, teachers need new school models. These models must **"extend the reach"** of great teachers to more students and **provide career paths** enabling all teachers to pursue excellence. In 2013-14, Syracuse City School District is partnering with the American Federation of Teachers, Education First, and Public Impact to help five schools implement this Opportunity Culture initiative. **Your school has been selected for this exciting new initiative!** A design team made up of your school leader, teachers, and other key stakeholders will work together to design a new school model that creates new roles for teachers and support staff, integrates technology in new ways, and designs career pathways to attract, retain, and support excellent teachers and their teams.

These school models redesign teachers' jobs and, in some cases, use age- and child-appropriate technology to put excellent teachers in charge of more students' learning and other teachers' development. Schools will implement a combination of models, which might include:

- **Multi-Classroom Leadership**, in which teacher-leaders can bring excellence to multiple classrooms by leading teams and continuing to teach. Unlike coaches or department leads, these teacher-leaders are accountable for their team teachers' student outcomes, and have the authority to select team members' roles and develop and support them. Schools can incorporate other reach models into these teams' work to increase collaboration time and pay both teacher-leaders and team members more.

- **Elementary Specialization**, in which elementary teachers reach more students by specializing in their best subjects or subject pairs—math and science, or language arts and social studies, for example. Teachers earn more for reaching more students by incorporating a new support person into their teams for non-instructional supervision and administrative work.
- **Time-Technology Swap**, in which students spend a portion of time learning basic skills digitally—as little as an hour daily. This lets teachers teach more students, for higher pay, without reducing personalized, higher-order instructional time.

These models serve as a starting point for school design teams. Teams may also develop other school models within the guiding principles below. For example, one pilot school’s teacher/principal design team developed a **Time-Time Swap**, in which students spend a portion of time with a new team paraprofessional who supervises independent and project work and non-digital skills practice—also as little as an hour daily. This lets teachers teach more students, for higher pay, without reducing personalized, higher-order instructional time. The Opportunity Culture team will be adding this model to materials for all schools in 2014. You may think of a new model, too!

Even when choosing an existing model, all Opportunity Culture school design teams tailor their models to fit their students’ needs, school cultures, and ambition to help students and elevate teaching excellence and leadership in their schools. All school teams make continual improvements during implementation.

As one of the five participating Syracuse schools, your school will implement new school models that meet these guiding principles, in addition to ensuring that teachers have a strong voice in crafting your model:

- Excellent teachers can **reach more students for more pay**, and **develop and advance** in their careers without having to leave the classroom, in roles that **take advantage of their talents**.
- Novice and solid teachers will **contribute to excellent outcomes** for students, **hone their craft** to move into the roles of excellent teachers, **have more time to collaborate** with teammates, and **earn more** as part of a school that extends reach.

## **A PROFESSION FULL OF OPPORTUNITY FOR SYRACUSE TEACHERS**

In an Opportunity Culture, the teaching profession is full of outstanding opportunities and peers, and the reputation of every teacher is enhanced. At these schools:

- **Hiring** of teacher-leaders uses highly selective screening methods, including academic success and competencies for great teaching
- **Teaching roles** are varied, take advantage of teachers’ strengths, develop teachers, and reach more students with excellence
- **Career advancement** is possible without leaving the classroom—teachers advance by reaching more students and leading peers, with a variety of career path options
- **Teachers’ impact** on students and peers increases with teaching excellence and leadership
- **Teacher retention** is high—the best colleagues keep teaching
- **Colleagues** are highly capable and committed to excellence
- **Teacher power** increases, especially for great teachers, in schools and the profession overall

## **PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHOOL DESIGN PROCESS**

Your school leader will establish a four- to six-person school design team composed of teachers, a school administrator, and other stakeholders to provide overall direction and oversight for the initiative. If you are interested in being a member of the school design team, please reach out to your school leaders(s) to learn more about the design process and team member responsibilities. If you are looking for other ways to participate, the school design team will engage with the entire school staff to provide updates and seek your feedback and input.