

Strategic Staffing: A Flexible Blueprint

Legislative Advisory Council
Meeting
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SREB

Southern Regional
Education Board

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A blue-tinted photograph of a school hallway. On the left and right sides are rows of metal lockers. A round analog clock is mounted on the left wall. In the center of the hallway, there is a whiteboard with the word "INFORMATION" written above it. The floor is polished and reflects the overhead lights. The overall atmosphere is quiet and empty.

Who's visited a school
recently?

What is strategic staffing?



Designing Sustainability



Strategic staffing offers an alternative. By redesigning roles and support structures, districts can **stabilize staffing proactively** rather than reactively.

Instead of staffing by convention or crisis, systems can **staff by design** — embedding support, leadership and collaboration into the daily work of teaching.

Systems of Support

Comprehensive **support** for ALL educators to build **strong** schools & create **brighter** futures

Systems of Support



Culture &
Collaboration



Time &
Priorities



Data &
Insights



Resources
& Tools



Professional
Learning



Feedback
& Coaching



Recognition
& Wellbeing



Advance
& Grow

The Keys to Unlocking the Power of Strategic Staffing

Strategic school staffing is a deliberate, needs- and culture-based approach to organizing educator roles, responsibilities, time and leadership to advance instructional goals and support workforce sustainability.

It is not a single program or prescribed model or formula.

Strategic staffing is a framework guided by three core principles:



Alignment

Staffing decisions are explicitly tied to instructional priorities and student population and needs.



Coherence

Roles, schedules, professional learning and compensation reinforce one another, rather than operating in silos.



Flexibility

Districts adapt staffing models to local context, rather than implementing uniform mandates.

The *Opportunity Culture*® Commitment

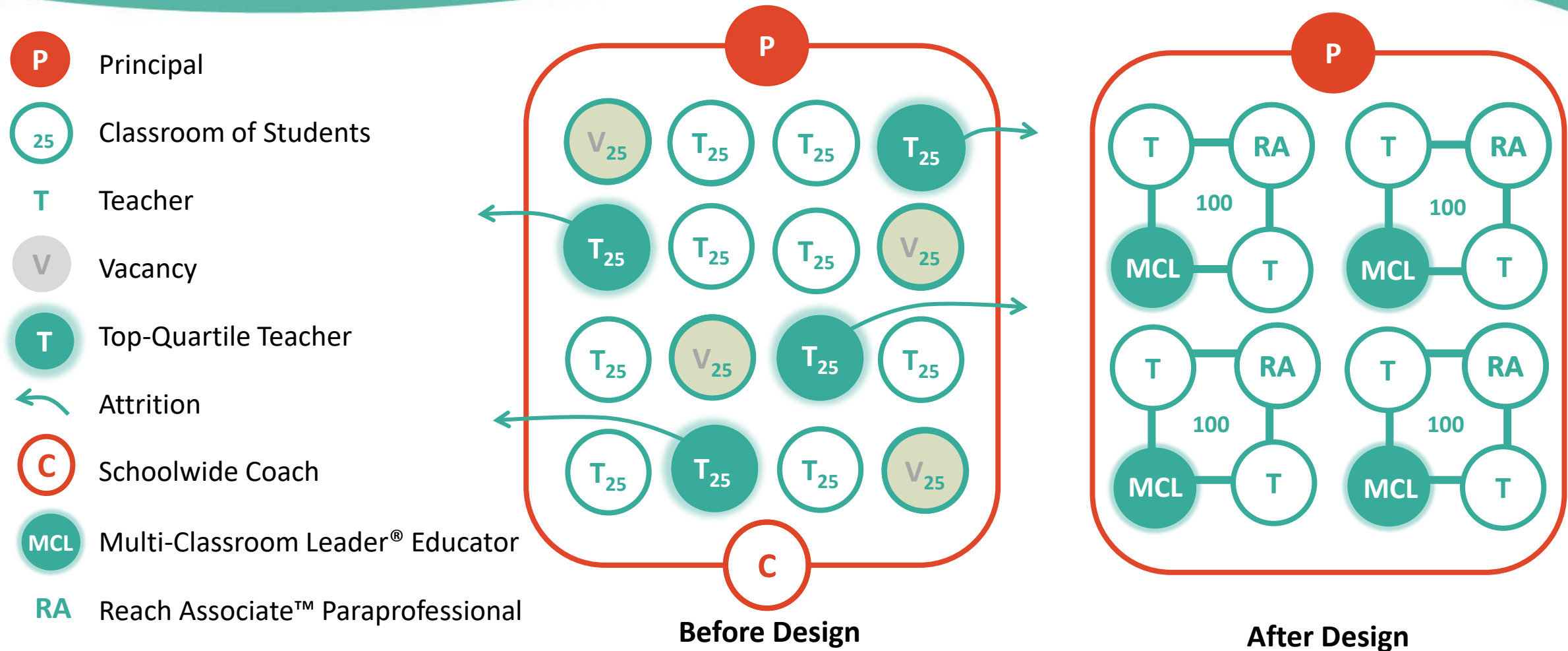
Reach *all students* with excellent teaching, consistently



Reach *all educators* with outstanding, paid career opportunities

...leading to dramatically higher learning growth.

School Redesign—With Results



Opportunity Culture® Team & Leadership Roles

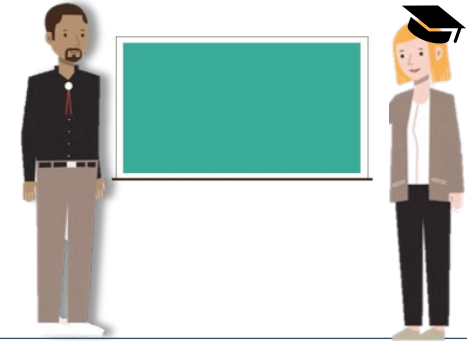
School Leader(s)



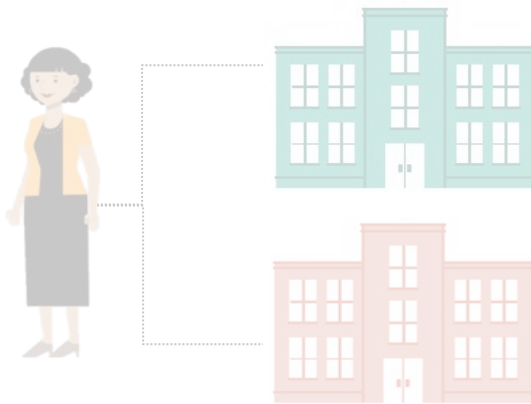
Multi-Classroom Leader® role



Reach Associate™ or
Teacher Resident role



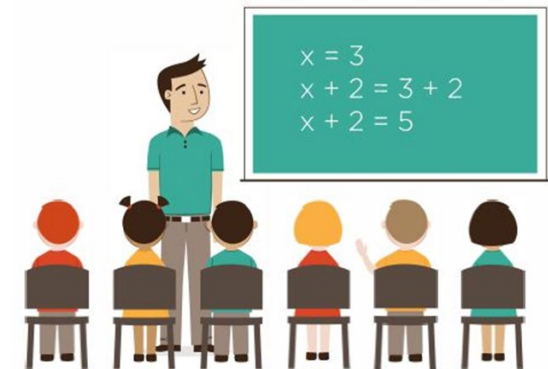
Multi-School Leader™ role



Team Reach Teacher™ role &
Model Team Reach Teacher™ role



Team Teachers



OC® Models Supercharge State Execution of Academic Policies

All curriculum, content and teaching method changes now flow through **accountable teaching team leaders** with prior high-growth learning results

Supercharging Policy → Implementation leads to:

- + Increased teacher satisfaction and retention
- + No additional cost: Pay funded within budgets
- + 5x more efficient training through MCL roles
- + Dramatic student learning growth

Literacy, Math, Other Key Initiatives

State C&I Staff, Coaches *District C&I Staff* *External Trainers*

School Principals

Supercharge

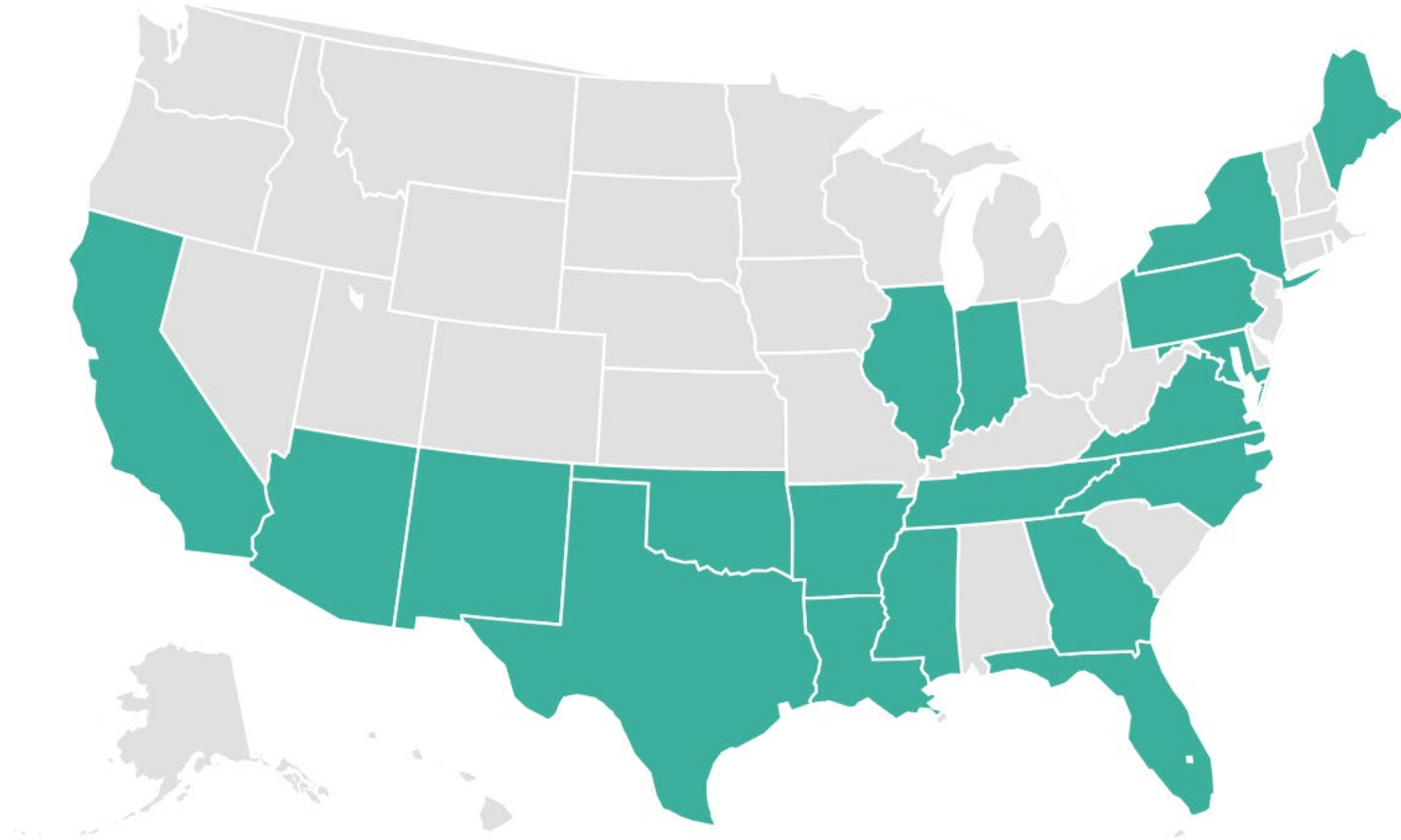
Multi-Classroom Leader® Roles:

- Lead small team via instruct'l planning, prep, & data analysis
- Observe and coach on the job
- Earn more while continuing to teach

Classroom Implementation: teachers equipped to lead change, drive student impact

States that Have Housed OC Schools

- 19 states
- More than 100 districts
- 325,000 students
- Rural and urban
- Single-school districts to top 20 city systems





Ms. Shanna Rae

UPCA★STARS



University Park Creative Arts School
Arts * Academics * Success

SREB

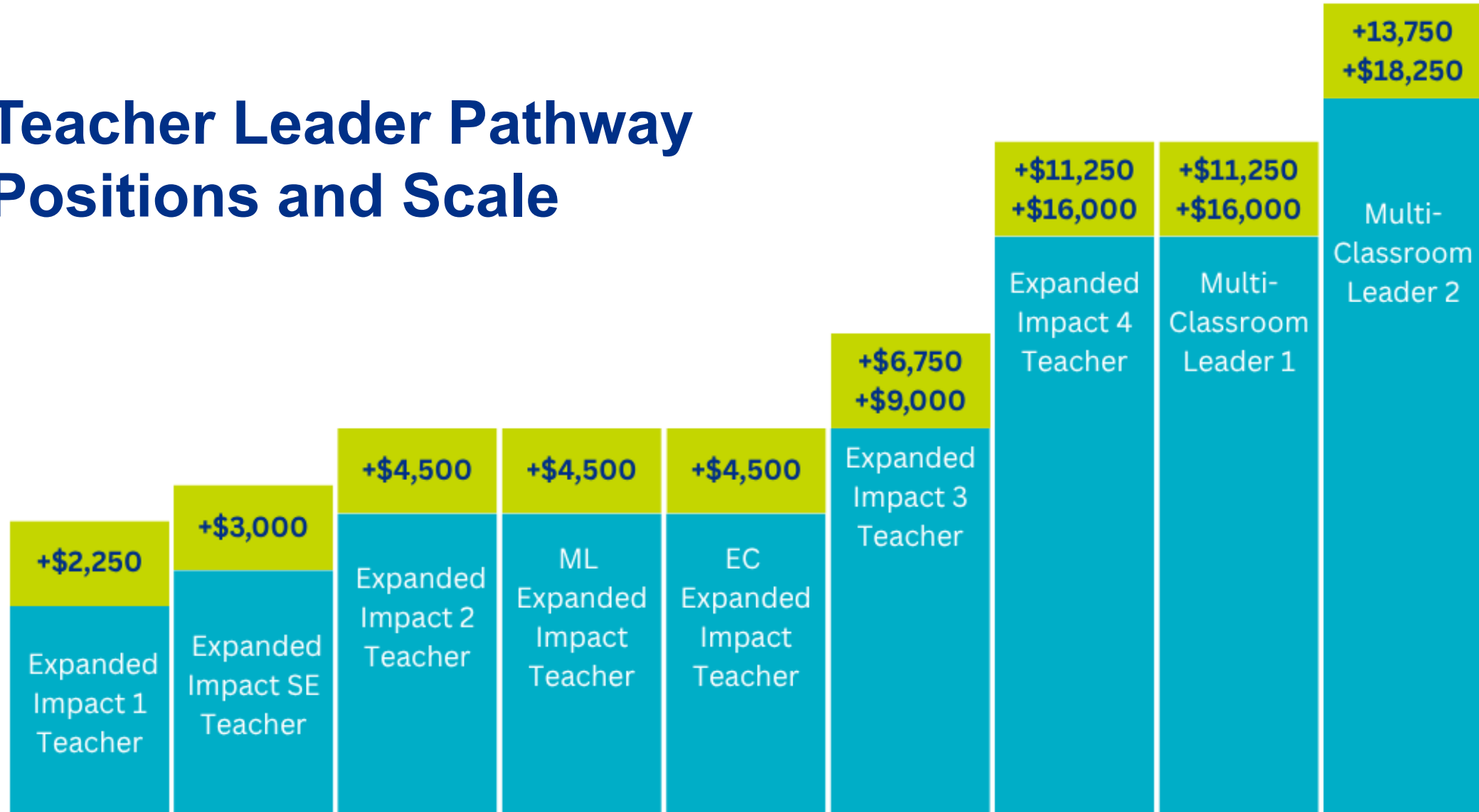
North Carolina

- Principal at UPCA, a K-5 magnet school of distinction
- Served as a principal for 8 years across CMS
- 2012 CMS Teacher of the Year
- 20+ years in education in North Carolina

Innovative Staffing



Teacher Leader Pathway Positions and Scale



Context

UPCA★STARS



University Park Creative Arts School
Arts * Academics * Success

UPCA prior to Principal Rae...

- Magnet school
- 65%+ low income
- Low performance for 7 consecutive years
 - Minimal growth
 - Low composite scores
 - Lacked strategic direction & instructional coherence

2021–22

- School Composite Score:
21.1
- Did Not Exceed Growth

2022–23

- School Composite Score:
21.4
- Did Not Exceed Growth

Impact

UPCA★STARS



University Park Creative Arts School
Arts * Academics * Success

Within 9 months...

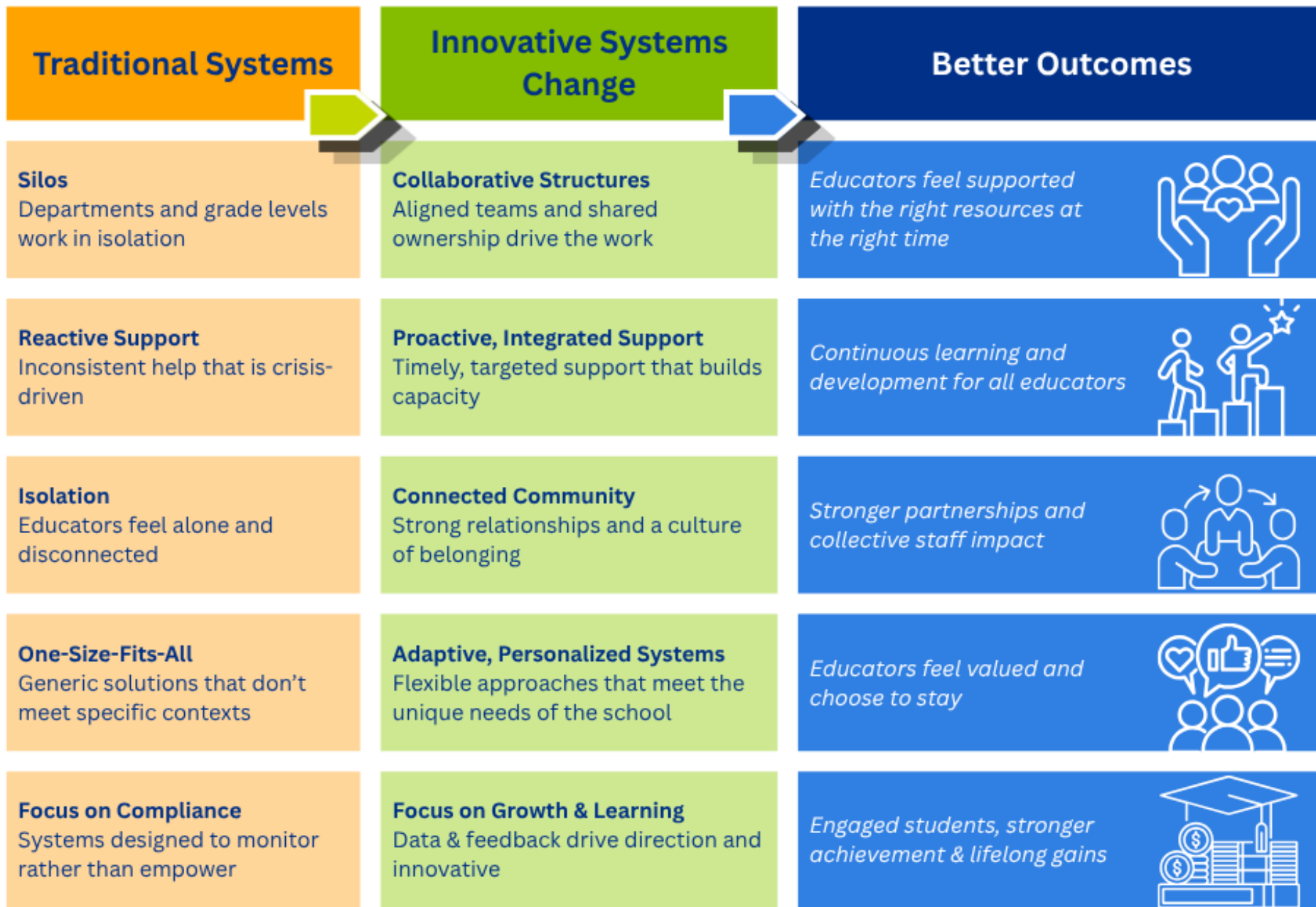
2023-24

- ⬆ **F to C** performance grade
- ⬆ **Exceeded growth** for the first time in 7 years
- ⬆ School Composite Score: **47.7**

2024-25

- ➡ Maintained C performance grade
- ⬆ **Exceeded growth for 2nd consecutive year**
- ⬆ School Composite Score: **54.5**
- ⬆ **6 points shy of achieving B grade**

Redesign in Action



2X–3X Rate of High-Growth Learning When Schools Use Research-Based Design

Nationally, schools with *Certified Opportunity Culture School*® status are **2X–3X more likely** to have high learning growth schoolwide than schools not using OC® design

What is “High Growth”?

In schools making high growth, students made **well over a typical year’s worth of progress**, on average.

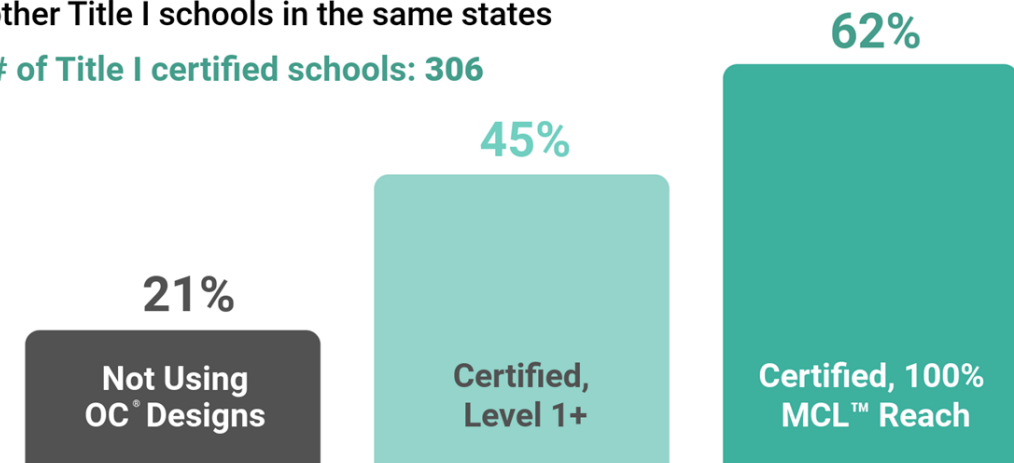
High growth generally means schools in the top 25% of the state’s combined growth measure for reading and math.

Percent of Schools Making High Growth Schoolwide

High Growth Surged 2–3X with New Certification

Title I schools with Certified Opportunity Culture School® status were ***much more likely*** to make high growth than other Title I schools in the same states

of Title I certified schools: 306



% Title I Schools in Each Category Making High Growth

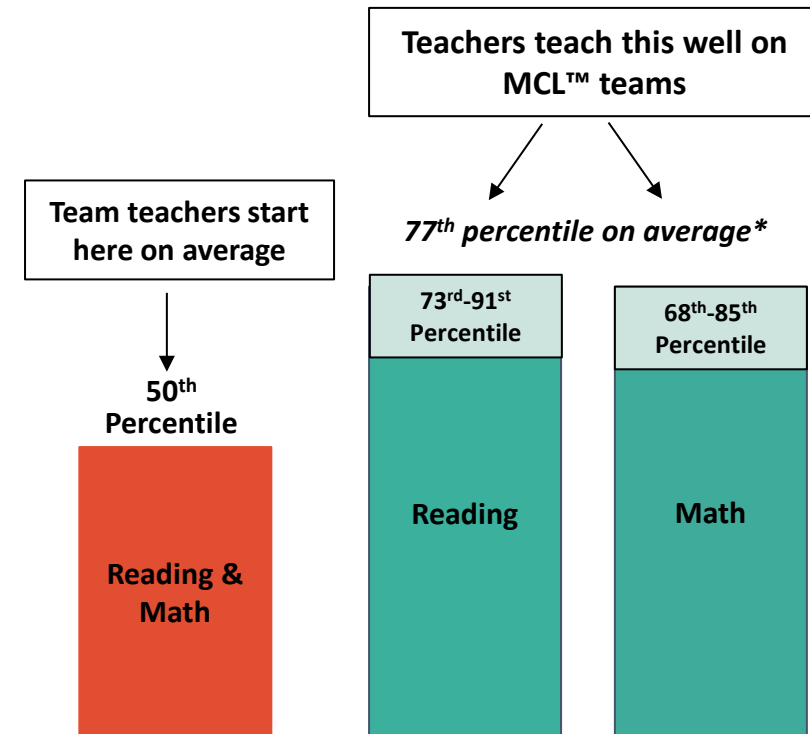
More Teachers Produce High-Growth Learning

3rd-party studies show that in schools with Opportunity Culture[®] roles:

- More teachers **produce** high-growth learning.
- More teachers can **advance** with higher pay.
- More **time** for teacher collaboration and learning.

Research shows that on MCL™ teams, student learning gains equate to nearly an **extra half-year of learning** for students each year, on average.*

Studies covered time period before roll-out of design standards, which have increased schoolwide learning growth.



***Two studies compared classrooms with Opportunity Culture[®] models to those without**

2018 Study: 15,000 students, 3 districts: Backes, B., & Hansen, M. (2018). *Reaching Further and Learning More?* CALDER Center.
2026 Study : 20,000 students, 1 district: Kirksey, J., Gottlieb, J., Wiseman, A., & Reed, B. (2026). *Evaluating Opportunity Culture[®]: Improving Student Achievement Through Strategic Staffing in West Texas*. Texas Tech University.
Results combine impact of MCL™ educators on directly taught students and that of team teachers, averaged across statistical models or years. CALDER numbers do not include 1 statistical model assuming zero spillover effect, since other research (including TTU) finds significant spillover.

SURVEY SAYS

Educators express strong satisfaction with their roles

99% of teacher-leaders
(in MCL™ roles)

want OC® models to continue in their school

>90% of all OC®
educators

want OC® models to continue in their school

OC® educators are **4x**
more satisfied
with time to do their jobs than U.S. teachers*

50% more likely to *strongly*
recommend teaching
than all U.S. teachers**

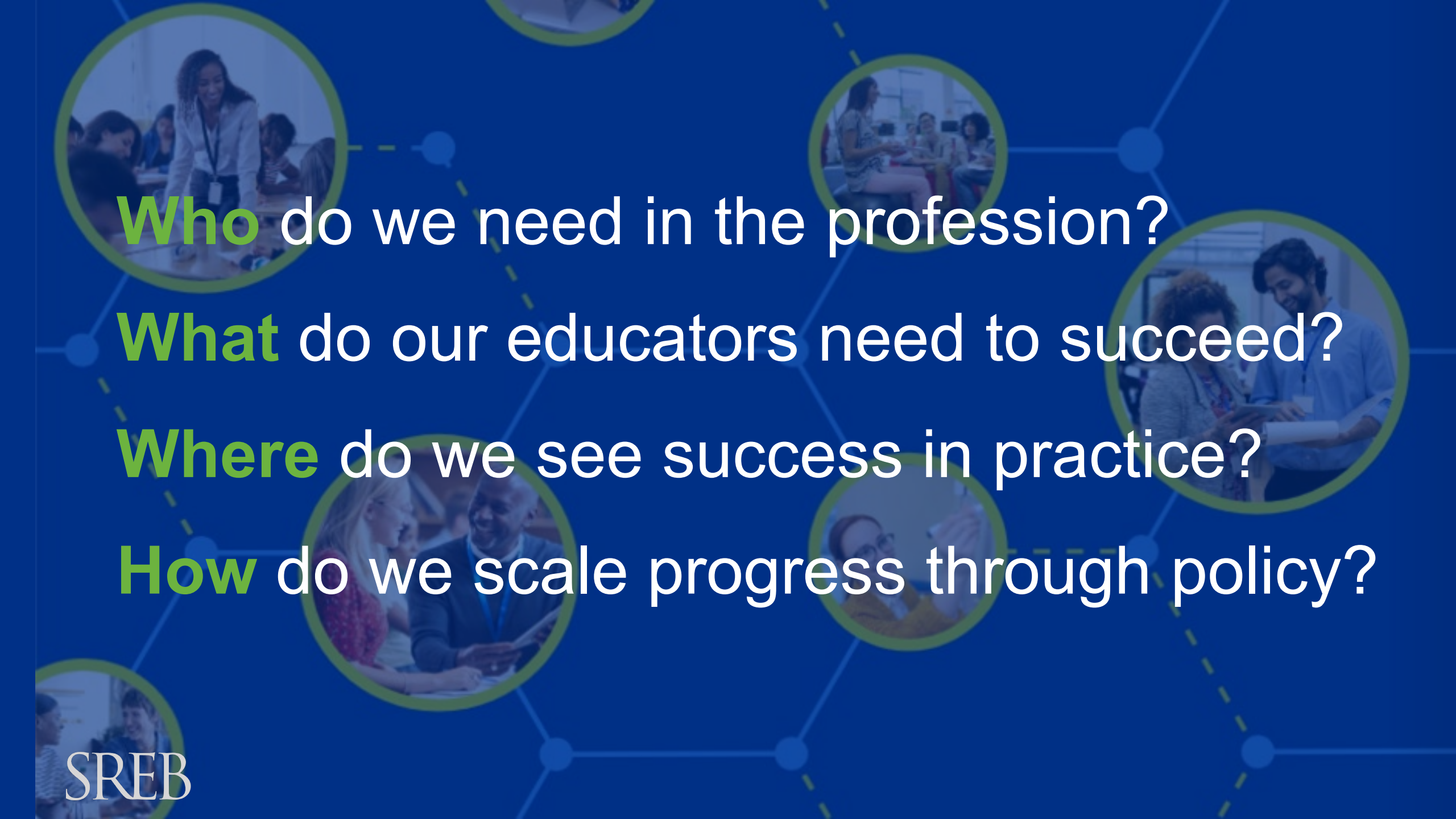
* Compared to national Pew survey 2025

** Compared to 2025 E4E survey ratings of 9 and 10

"I love Opportunity Culture because it's allowed me to stay in teaching."



—North Carolina Educator



Who do we need in the profession?

What do our educators need to succeed?

Where do we see success in practice?

How do we scale progress through policy?

Scaling Innovation

SREB's Educator Workforce Blueprint

Four elements are necessary to address educator workforce challenges comprehensively and sustainably.



**Pathways &
Preparation for
all Educators**

**Professional
Support for
Educators at All
Levels**

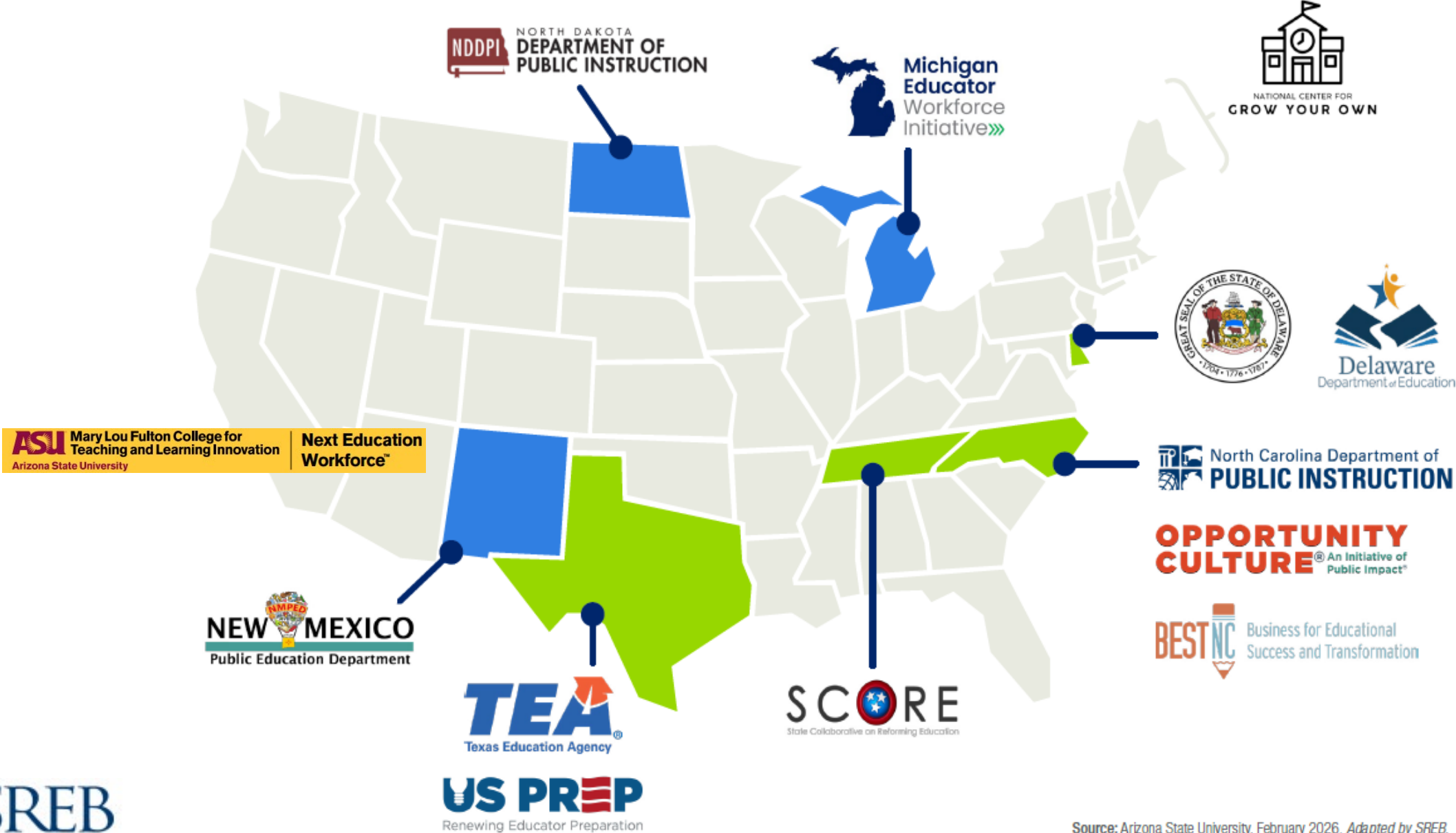


**Licensure,
Advancement &
Strategic Staffing**

**Compensation,
Incentives &
Working Conditions**



State-Level Action



Source: Arizona State University, February 2026. Adapted by SREB.

Strategic Progress

What policies can you adjust in your state to help **strategically innovate staffing** models in schools?

Key Educator Workforce Policy Areas

- Pathways & Preparation
- Licensure, Advancement & Strategic Staffing
- Professional Support & Collaboration
- Compensation, Incentives & Working Conditions

SREB Policy Recommendations



Operationalize Flexibility

- State policy can **define**:
 - quality standards for teacher roles, data to track outcomes, funding eligibility tied to quality
- State policy can **enable**:
 - multiple staffing configurations, differentiated roles and pay, schedule and seat-time flexibility
- **Avoid**: mandating one model, fixed staffing ratios, "one teacher one classroom" compliance assumptions

Regulatory Flexibility

Recommendation 1

- Expand **class-size waivers** for team-teaching models
- Let interns, residents, and paraprofessionals take on real **instructional roles**
- Reform **teacher-of-record rules** to allow supervised team-based delivery

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Certification & Career Structures

Recommendation 2

- Establish formal residency credentials
- Create multi-stage career ladders and leadership roles that don't require leaving the classroom
- Allow differentiated compensation by role, responsibility and hard-to-staff assignments

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Sustainable Funding & Compensation

Recommendation 3

- Fund paid residencies and scale mentor programs
- Enable reallocation of funds from vacancies and long-term subs to lead-teacher and resident pay
- Shift from short-term grants to permanent funding streams

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Technical Assistance & Capacity

Recommendation 4

- Fund expert providers to help redesign schedules and staffing
 - (Opportunity Culture, US PREP, Next Education Workforce)
- Build or utilize regional support hubs so districts aren't navigating redesign alone
 - (e.g., Education Service Centers)

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Evaluation & Data Systems

Recommendation 5

- Revise evaluations for joint team accountability, not just individual classrooms
- Centralize real-time vacancy and turnover data statewide
- Fund teacher workload studies to inform smarter role design at the local level

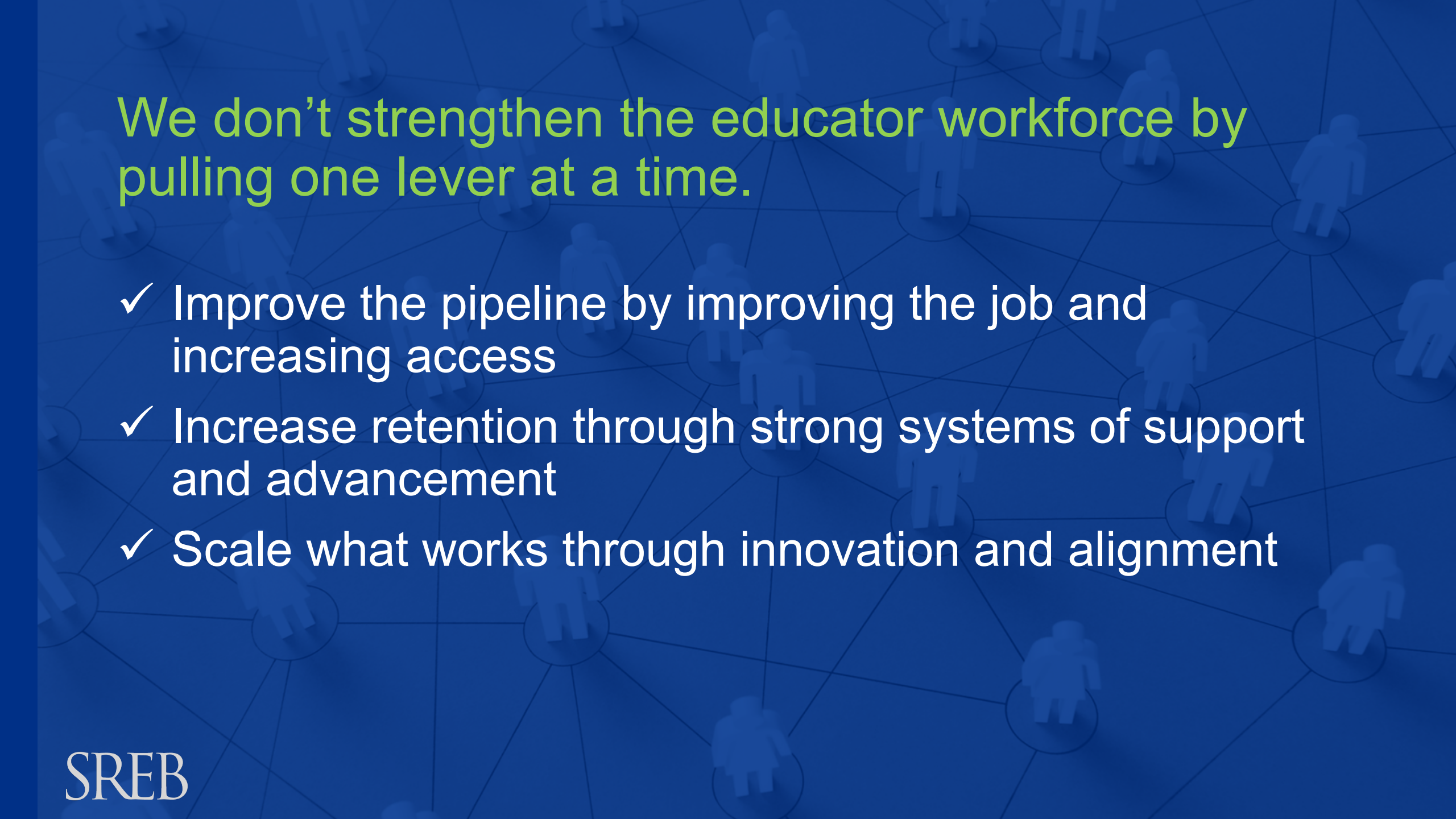
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The background of the slide is a blue-tinted photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a young woman with dark curly hair and glasses is looking towards the right, holding a pen. Behind her, other students are visible, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The overall scene suggests a collaborative learning environment.

Teaching must be an
**attractive, rewarding and
supportive** career to retain
talent.

Adequately preparing, supporting &
valuing teachers leads to
**higher retention, improved student
outcomes & economic gains.**



We don't strengthen the educator workforce by pulling one lever at a time.

- ✓ Improve the pipeline by improving the job and increasing access
- ✓ Increase retention through strong systems of support and advancement
- ✓ Scale what works through innovation and alignment

Educator Workforce Resources



Coming in 2027:

A **NEW** Interactive
Educator Labor Market &
Compensation Dashboard

State Educator Workforce Health
Index and Predictive Modeling
Framework

Teacher Residency and
Apprenticeships Policy Report

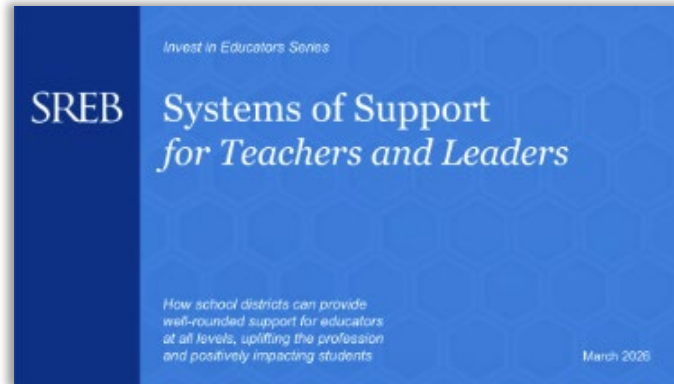
Teacher Working Conditions
Survey Study

SREB.org/TeacherWorkforce



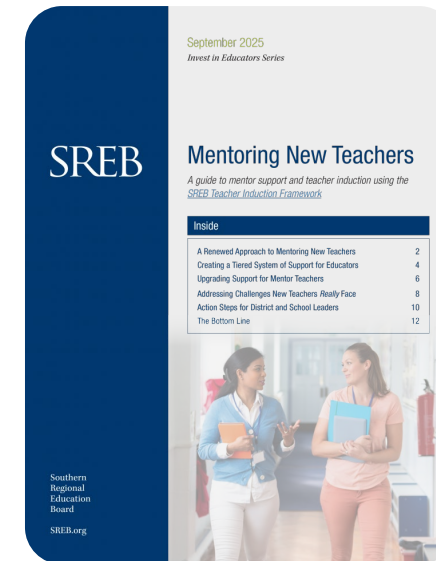
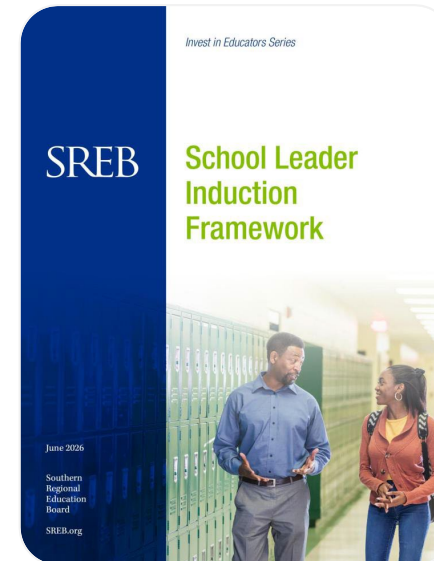
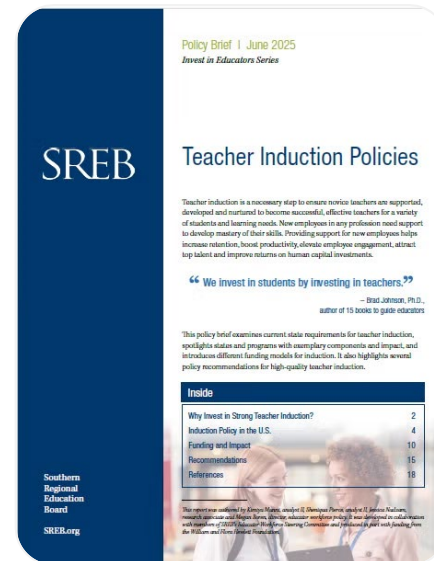
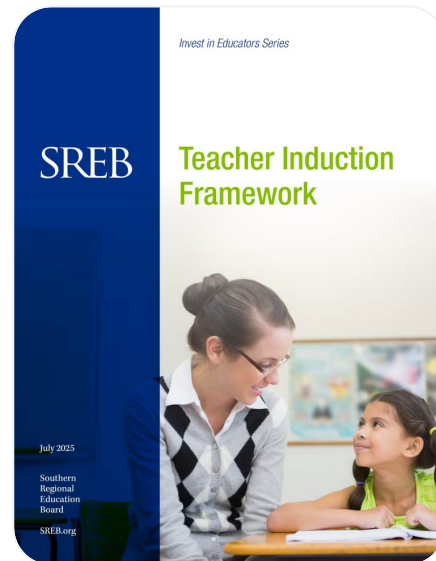
Educator Workforce Policy reports authored by the full Educator Workforce team, including Sheniqua Pierce & Jessica Nadzam

Educator Support Resources



Coming this fall:
Principal Induction Policies in the U.S.

SREB.org/Induction
SREB.org/Educator-workforce-research



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