

WHO WE ARE

We are Teach Plus Colorado Charter Teacher Policy Fellows, a diverse group of classroom educators committed to advancing policies that improve student outcomes. Students thrive when they have high-quality, well-supported teachers, yet current staffing models often fail to maximize teacher expertise, foster collaboration, or create leadership opportunities.

Strategic staffing models—including Multi-Classroom Leadership (MCL), team-based teaching, and structured career pathways—offer a proven solution. These approaches retain great teachers, strengthen instructional quality, and enhance student learning. Charter schools, with their flexibility and innovation, are uniquely positioned to pilot and refine these models.

We are exploring how **Colorado's charter sector can lead in implementing and studying strategic staffing**. By testing and scaling these models, charter schools can generate insights that inform broader efforts to build a stronger, more sustainable educator workforce.

THE CHALLENGE: TRADITIONAL STAFFING MODELS LIMIT TEACHER IMPACT

Colorado schools face mounting pressures, including teacher shortages, retention challenges, and persistent opportunity gaps. Traditional staffing models fail to maximize teacher expertise and limit student learning by providing few career growth opportunities and minimal collaboration.

- 42% of Colorado teachers leave the profession within five years, largely due to burnout and limited career advancement (Colorado Department of Education, 2023).
- High-poverty schools struggle to retain top educators, limiting access to strong, well-supported teachers for students who need them most (Stanford-Harvard-Dartmouth Education Recovery Scorecard, 2024).

Although some charter schools have adopted elements of strategic staffing, these efforts have not been systemic or sustained. Without intentional, structural change, students—particularly those in under-resourced schools—will continue to miss out on the high-quality instruction they deserve.

To address these challenges, **Colorado must invest in strategic staffing models** that restructure educator roles to increase collaboration, expand career pathways, and improve instructional quality.

THE SOLUTION: STRATEGIC, TEAM-BASED STAFFING MODELS

Schools implementing strategic staffing models prioritize educator collaboration, mentorship, and leadership development. These models ensure that experienced teachers mentor others, provide consistent instructional support, and stay in the classroom while advancing in their careers.

Three research-backed strategies define effective strategic staffing:

- + Multi-classroom leadership: A lead teacher coaches and supports a team of educators, ensuring high-impact instruction across multiple classrooms.
 - Schools using multi-classroom leadership teams for at least four years were 83% more likely to achieve high student growth than schools without them (Public Impact, 2025).
 - Opportunity Culture, a national initiative, has helped schools such as Uplift Charter Schools in Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas, adopt MCL, resulting in measurable gains in student learning and increased teacher satisfaction (Public Impact, 2025).
- + Team-based teaching: Instead of working in isolation, teachers collaborate in instructional teams, allowing for specialization, shared responsibilities, and structured mentorship.

- Ector County ISD, Texas, adopted this model and was identified as a top-performing district in student learning gains by the Stanford-Harvard-Dartmouth Education Recovery Scorecard (Public Impact, 2025).
 - Arizona State University’s Next Education Workforce has successfully redesigned teaching roles by creating educator teams, strengthening instructional quality through collaborative staffing models (Public Impact, 2025).
- + Career pathways: High-performing teachers often leave the classroom due to limited advancement opportunities. According to Public Impact, schools with structured leadership pathways and compensation incentives see higher teacher retention and satisfaction.
- In Opportunity Culture schools, 99 percent of Multi-classroom leaders wanted to continue in their role, and 91% of all educators in Opportunity Culture staffing models supported continuation (Public Impact, 2025).

These models enable schools to align staffing with instructional needs, ensuring that students receive high-quality teaching while educators are supported and motivated to thrive in their profession. Success stories from across the country provide compelling evidence that strategic staffing leads to long-term improvements in student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and retention.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

For strategic staffing models to succeed, **schools, funders, and education partners** must collaborate to support implementation and long-term sustainability.

- **Schools:** Charter schools, with their flexibility and innovation, are well-positioned to lead in piloting strategic staffing models. Effective pilots should include planning, professional learning, and phased implementation, with a focus on teacher leadership training and mentorship. Charter networks can also partner with universities to develop or expand teacher residency programs, ensuring long-term sustainability and scalability.
- **Funders:** Grants and philanthropic investments can accelerate pilot programs, enabling schools to test and refine these approaches before scaling statewide.
- **Education partners:** Universities, research organizations, and professional learning networks can provide expertise, implementation support, and data insights to ensure these models are executed effectively. Collaborative research can strengthen best practices and inform future policy.

CONCLUSION

Colorado must invest in strategic staffing models that expand leadership pathways, enhance collaboration, and improve instructional quality. Charter schools, with their flexibility and innovation, are uniquely positioned to lead in piloting and refining these models. By piloting and refining these models, Colorado’s charter sector can generate insights that inform broader efforts to build a stronger, more sustainable educator workforce.

The time for transformation is now—Charter school leaders, networks, and funders must act to launch pilot programs that test, refine, and scale strategic staffing models. By investing in these efforts, Colorado can create sustainable pathways for teacher leadership, improve instructional quality, and ensure students—particularly those in underserved communities—have access to high-quality educators.

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