



Dr. Josh Barnett has had a front-row seat to witness the learning and work unfold at Wildflower Accelerated Academy in Avondale Elementary School District, where school leaders make every decision based on data and what is best for students.

DATA-DRIVEN CORE ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:



Evaluation:

Using a system capable of differentiating educator performance levels and providing actionable feedback for improvement.



Professional Development:

Creating ongoing professional development opportunities.



Recruitment and Retention:

Ensuring the recruitment and retention of effective teacher leaders.



Focus on Environment:

Implementing a challenging, rewarding, and collegial environment focused on high-quality instruction and student learning.

The Evidence Effect:

DEMONSTRATED IMPACT



DR. JOSH BARNETT, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

In 1999, the TAP System was established after years of incubating an idea about how to most effectively transform schools. The central theory behind TAP is that an effective teacher is the most important school-based factor to increase student achievement—a finding that has been echoed over the last 20 years of implementation and a consensus among the extant school improvement literature.

Grounded in a clear, evidence-based approach, the TAP System has been evaluated to answer the most important question: Does it work? From 1999 to today, clear results illustrate the power of this initiative. In 2013, third-party researchers found that TAP schools significantly outperform comparison schools after two and three years of implementation. In 2019, another study published in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* identified TAP as a key example of an optimum incentive pay program and highlighted its “large and significant effects” on math achievement. Every day, we hear stories of transformation from partners like Premont Independent School District in Texas, which 10 years ago was at risk for closure due to low performance. Last year, Premont earned a B rating from the state and was part of the governor’s state of the state address.

In short: Yes, the TAP System works. Building human capital within schools to implement data-driven improvement processes leads to shifts in school culture, changes in beliefs and attitudes, and progress in student achievement.

NIET’s initiatives are supported through the combination of rigorous research and on-the-ground experiences. Our focus on changing schools begins with each educator – each school leader, each classroom teacher. We meticulously track our efforts for fidelity of

implementation, feedback loops from educators, as well as the summative impact on instructional change and achievement. These data points are collected throughout our work with every partner – in real-time and at key milestones – to adjust as needed to ensure we stay on track toward changing behaviors and impacting students.

With this dedicated approach to collecting and reviewing both anecdotal feedback and data, NIET’s results stand out because of the decades-long track record of growth and success in raising student achievement in high-need schools.

The data-driven core elements of school improvement (*page 36, left*) are linked in each service NIET offers, and the commitment to these principles ensures our work continues to make an impact. And I would argue the quality of NIET’s team in implementing these processes is another key reason behind how our organization has set itself apart. Our world-class team of educators and specialists are uniquely gifted at making our research-driven approach accessible.

After 20 years, NIET’s work has expanded greatly in reach and offerings, with new services, more tailored approaches to meet schools where they are, and partners across 20 states. At the same time, nothing has changed in the focus of our work: building educator effectiveness to give all students the opportunity for success. We are as dedicated to excellence as we were upon inception, and the results resoundingly and repeatedly demonstrate the impact on instructional improvement, educator efficacy, teacher retention, and student achievement. We are proud of that growth and progress and look forward to sharing the results from the next 20 years. ●