

# NIET 2026

## SUMMER INSTITUTE

GENERATING EXCELLENCE  
IN EVERY SCHOOL



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## Table of Contents

### Conference Overview

Participants will be assigned to training rooms by district or school for Breakout Session Blocks A (ILT session) and F (Team Reflection and Planning). Attendees will attend 4 out of 5 total content sessions over the course of the Summer Institute.

### Introductory and Event Materials

- » Welcome from CEO, Joshua Barnett, and Founder, Lowell Milken
- » Session descriptions
- » Session schedule
- » Event notes
- » Map

### Training Materials

- » **Tab 1** - Coherence Starts With the ILT
- » **Tab 2** - Student Work Powers Cluster Learning
- » **Tab 3** - Aligned Instruction Ensures Coherence
- » **Tab 4** - Coaching Anchors Instructional Coherence
- » **Tab 5** - Coherence Grows Through Collective Leadership
- » **Tab 6** - Student Work Shapes Leadership
- » **Tab 7** - Team Planning

# WELCOME.



## Dr. Joshua Barnett Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Joshua Barnett serves as CEO of the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), a national nonprofit organization that has trained and supported more than 35,000 teacher leaders over twenty-five years with proven results. Annually, NIET serves more than 350,000 educators across more than 1,000 districts, impacting 3.5 million students nationwide. He leads a team of experts focused on building sustainable systems that support effective teaching in every classroom, grounded in NIET's research-based TAP System.

NIET's work has been recognized in national media outlets as a driver of the "southern surge" of growth in reading and math enabling states like Louisiana to climb in national rankings. National and state education policies increasingly reflect the effective practices envisioned and implemented by NIET including investing in teacher leadership roles, strengthening systems for educator observation and feedback, and providing performance-based compensation. With more than 50 scholarly studies demonstrating impact, NIET's efforts to increase educator retention and student achievement have resulted in a remarkable \$14 to \$1 return on investment for communities.

Josh earned his PhD at the University of Arkansas in Education Policy, where he was an inaugural Walton Fellow. Before joining NIET, he served as a visiting professor at Massey University and as an assistant professor at Arizona State University. He is the author of numerous publications, including the bestselling book *Unleashing Teacher Leadership: A Toolkit for Ensuring Effective Instruction in Every Classroom*. He is driven by a belief that teachers are the most powerful lever for change in education. He resides in Scottsdale, Arizona with his wife and four children.

**W**elcome to the NIET Summer Institute! This annual gathering brings together exceptional educators from across the country with a shared purpose: to learn, collaborate, and generate excellence in every school. The Summer Institute will provide you and your team the opportunity to work together with support from NIET to plan for the 2026-2027 school year and strengthen your practice as an educator and a leader. The training and collaboration we have planned are specifically designed to help you transfer learning and impact the educators and students in your schools. We appreciate your continued partnership and thank you for being part of a community committed to continuous improvement and collective impact. We look forward to setting your team up to generate excellence throughout the school year. Enjoy the Summer Institute!

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**Lowell  
Milken**  
Founder

[Lowell Milken](#)'s lifelong commitment to strengthening K-12 education has led to some of the country's most innovative means to dramatically advance educator effectiveness. As founder of the [National Institute for Excellence in Teaching](#), Lowell actively works with a team of educators, research and policy experts who forge partnerships that create leadership and professional development opportunities for educators to thrive. Those working with NIET range from schools, districts and states to universities and other nonprofit organizations. NIET's services are rooted in the implementation of educator effectiveness best practices and comprehensive reform through [TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement](#). For over two decades, more than 100 research studies have pointed to the success of NIET's approach, with proven outcomes of increased teacher effectiveness and student performance.

Since 1982, Lowell co-founded and has chaired the [Milken Family Foundation](#) to discover and advance inventive, effective ways of helping people help themselves and those around them lead productive and satisfying lives—with a focus on education as the most conducive means to accomplish these goals. Lowell created the [Milken Educator Awards](#) in 1987 to celebrate, elevate and activate exceptional teachers and principals. Guided by the philosophy that the most talented in the profession should be honored and emulated—as they are in film, sports and many other fields—the Awards have surprised outstanding educators with individual, unrestricted \$25,000 prizes, presented during all-school ceremonies filled with cheering students, colleagues, distinguished officials and media. Recipients who comprise the national Milken Educator Network, now over 3,000-strong,

are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish.

Hailed as the “Oscars of Teaching,” the Milken Educator Award has become a national symbol of the crucial role that outstanding educators play in strengthening the skills, knowledge and experiences of the next generation of Americans and in encouraging talented young people to consider teaching as a career.

Another organization creating rich opportunities for educators, students and the community is the [Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes \(LMC\)](#). Established by Lowell in 2007 with 1992 Kansas Milken Educator Norm Conard, LMC discovers, develops and communicates the stories of Unsung Heroes who have positively influenced the course of history. Through student-driven, project-based learning, students and entire communities learn that each person—regardless of age or circumstances—has the responsibility to take actions that create change by improving the lives of others. The Hall of Unsung Heroes opened in 2016 at the Lowell Milken Center's Fort Scott, Kansas, headquarters, as a state-of-the-art museum and hub of research and discovery. LMC has reached over 3,000,000 students around the world.

[ARTEFFECT](#) extends the learning around Unsung Heroes as role models by inviting middle and high school classrooms to interpret these stories through the visual arts. The initiative offers opportunities for advocacy, recognition, exhibitions, educational resources, and professional development through its Ambassadors Program—all to create a world-class art collection by students that honors the profound impact of one individual to inspire the many.

Further education efforts championed by Lowell include the [Hoffmitz Milken Center for Typography \(HMCT\)](#) at Art Center College of Design, which is dedicated to setting the global standard of excellence in typography and design education at a time of rapidly changing visual communication methods and devices.

In 2011, UCLA School of Law established the [Lowell Milken Institute for Business Law and Policy \(LMI\)](#) to extend greater opportunities to UCLA students, faculty, young law practitioners and alumni. Building on the school's already outstanding programs, LMI provides expanded studies in business law and policy, clinical experience and additional research opportunities for faculty, along with faculty fellowships, student scholarships, awards and business law

conferences. [The Lowell Milken Institute-Sandler Prize for New Entrepreneurs](#) is a business plan competition offering a substantial financial prize to propel the winning business plan forward. The knowledge, skills and experience gained through LMI prepare students for outstanding careers and leadership in law as well as business, government and philanthropy. The [Lowell Milken Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofits \(LMPN\)](#) is a central hub for education, thought leadership and scholarship at a time when the generational wealth shift is transforming philanthropy and the nonprofit sector.

By creating strong and vibrant communities in philanthropy as well as business, Lowell actively promotes excellence in education for a global economy. Among other business leadership roles, he chairs the National Realty Trust and London-based Heron International, a worldwide leader in property development.

Lowell's accomplishments in education have been acknowledged with honors from the National Association of State Boards of Education, the Horace Mann League, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Kappa Delta Pi international honor society in the field of education, and UCLA School of Law. In 2017, he was presented with the Education Commission of the States' James Bryant Conant Award, its highest honor, for his lifetime of significant individual contributions to improving education.

Lowell's efforts to advance educational excellence draw inspiration from the talented teachers he was privileged to have in the California public school system, which he attended from elementary through graduate school. At UC Berkeley, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude, receiving the School of Business Administration's Most Outstanding Student Award.

He received his law degree from UCLA, where he was awarded the academic honors of Order of the Coif and UCLA Law Review. In 2009, Lowell was named UCLA Law Alumnus of the Year for Public Service. Both Chapman University and Hebrew Union College have presented Lowell with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## SESSION A

### Deep Dive

#### Coherence Starts With the ILT

This session focuses on clarifying the responsibilities of Instructional Leadership Team members, strengthening shared goal-setting practices, and establishing the leadership systems necessary to ensure coherent instructional expectations across schools and classrooms.

## SESSION B, C, D, & E

### Breakout Sessions

#### Student Work Powers Cluster Learning

This session explores how student work drives instructional coherence in Cluster meetings. Participants examine how to lead Cluster meetings and leverage student work to guide learning, plan instruction, and model shifts, highlighting how engaging teachers with student work ensures consistent practice and stronger results.

#### Aligned Instruction Ensures Coherence

This session explores how aligned instruction ensures coherence across classrooms. Participants focus on aligning supports for diverse learners to core instruction, examining how to avoid fragmented supports and ensure all students have access to grade-level content.

#### Coaching Anchors Instructional Coherence

This session explores how aligned coaching practices drive instructional coherence across classrooms, with a focus on supporting early career teachers. Participants build coaching practices that highlight how aligned feedback, goals, and supports ensure consistent expectations and stronger instructional outcomes.

#### Coherence Grows Through Collective Leadership

This session explores how collective leadership drives instructional coherence across classrooms. Participants strengthen systems for leader collaboration and mutual support, highlighting how shared responsibility for leadership actions and intentional use of existing structures ensure consistent expectations and stronger results.

#### Student Work Shapes Leadership

This session explores how student work drives daily leader actions to strengthen instructional coherence across schools and classrooms. Participants build a system for using student work to guide decisions, highlighting how aligned actions and supports ensure consistent expectations and a culture of shared responsibility for learning.

## SESSION F

### Team Reflection and Planning

#### Team Planning

This session focuses on team collaboration by analyzing prior-year artifacts, reflecting on key learning, and identifying strengths, needs, and next steps to strengthen leadership practices, enhance teaching effectiveness, and improve student outcomes for the upcoming school year.

# TUESDAY, June 9, 2026

| Rooms          | 9:15 am - 10:45 am              | 11:00 am - 12:30 pm                           | 1:45 pm - 3:15 pm                             |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
|                | <b>Session A:<br/>Deep Dive</b> | <b>Session B:<br/>Breakout</b>                | <b>Session C:<br/>Breakout</b>                |
| <b>Grand 2</b> | Coherence Starts With the ILT   | Student Work Powers Cluster Learning          | Student Work Powers Cluster Learning          |
| <b>Grand 3</b> | Coherence Starts With the ILT   | Aligned Instruction Ensures Coherence         | Aligned Instruction Ensures Coherence         |
| <b>Grand 4</b> | Coherence Starts With the ILT   | Coaching Anchors Instructional Coherence      | Coaching Anchors Instructional Coherence      |
| <b>Grand 7</b> | Coherence Starts With the ILT   | Coherence Grows Through Collective Leadership | Coherence Grows Through Collective Leadership |
| <b>Grand 8</b> | Coherence Starts With the ILT   | Student Work Shapes Leadership                | Student Work Shapes Leadership                |

**JW Grand Ballroom 5-6 Welcome & Opening 8:00 am - 9:00 am**

**JW Grand Ballroom 5-6 Lunch 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm**

# WEDNESDAY, June 10, 2026

| Rooms          | 9:15 am - 10:45 am                                  | 11:00 am - 12:30 pm                                 | 1:45 pm - 3:00 pm                                      |
|----------------|---|---|--|
|                | <b>Session D:<br/>Breakout</b>                      | <b>Session E:<br/>Breakout</b>                      | <b>Session F:<br/>Team Reflection<br/>and Planning</b> |
| <b>Grand 2</b> | Student Work Powers<br>Cluster Learning             | Student Work Powers<br>Cluster Learning             | Team Planning  |
| <b>Grand 3</b> | Aligned Instruction<br>Ensures Coherence            | Aligned Instruction<br>Ensures Coherence            | Team Planning  |
| <b>Grand 4</b> | Coaching Anchors<br>Instructional Coherence         | Coaching Anchors<br>Instructional Coherence         | Team Planning  |
| <b>Grand 7</b> | Coherence Grows<br>Through Collective<br>Leadership | Coherence Grows<br>Through Collective<br>Leadership | Team Planning  |
| <b>Grand 8</b> | Student Work Shapes<br>Leadership                   | Student Work Shapes<br>Leadership                   | Team Planning  |

JW Grand Ballroom 5-6 General Session 8:00 am - 9:00 am

JW Grand Ballroom 5-6 Lunch 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

# EVENT NOTES

## SUMMER INSTITUTE REGISTRATION CHECK-IN

Summer Institute general registration check-in will be in the JW Grand Foyer East next to the escalators on the third floor of the JW Marriott Indianapolis at the registration desks on Monday, June 8, from 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. and again on Tuesday, June 9, from 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Early registration check-in on Monday afternoon is highly encouraged to avoid a line.

General Summer Institute questions will be handled at the registration counters throughout the training. In addition, staff members will be available during sessions and meal functions. They can be identified by an orange staff lanyard and will be happy to assist you.

## MEETING ROOMS

The trainings will take place on the third floor of the JW Marriott in the JW Grand Ballroom meeting rooms. The JW Grand Ballroom 5-6 is where the general sessions and lunch will take place each day. Breakout rooms will be held in the JW Grand Ballrooms 2-4 and 7-8.

## PARKING

Self-parking at the JW Marriott Indianapolis is \$59 per night, with valet parking available (price varies daily). An additional parking garage is available across the street for \$40 per day if staying over 12 hours.

## MEALS & HOTEL FEATURES

A morning coffee break and lunch will be provided on both Tuesday and Wednesday. Dinner is on your own for all days while attending the Summer Institute. On-site dining options can be found by scanning the QR code below.

For attendee convenience, the hotel features an on-site Starbucks and FedEx on the second floor by the escalator and skywalk.



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JW Marriott Indianapolis  
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- GENERAL SESSIONS
- BREAKOUT SESSIONS
- REGISTRATION



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