



Goal: I can choose and use a model or strategy to subtract decimals.

Goal: 😞 I can understand how text features help me gain meaning from a text.

Goal: 😊 I can use text features to support my...

Goal: I can use a... to help me explain how Spain felt about Sir Drake and why.

5-8:50  
Writing

# TALENTED TEACHERS LEAD THE WAY

By Lowell Milken, Chairman & Founder

This past year we have seen significant changes in education policy at the federal level, as well as in many states. As I reflect on the challenges and opportunities presented by these changes, I draw confidence from the growing number of teacher, school and district leaders who are in a position to speak knowledgably and confidently about what they know works for teachers and students. It is critically important that we continue to press for the improvements we know prepare students for success in our global economy. It is equally critical that we identify and work to provide educators with the supports needed to prepare them to be successful in a job whose importance is only increasing.

in the state four years ago to the second-highest state recognition level for the past two years. The impact for students can be seen in 11th grade math, for example, where achievement increased from one percent to over 50 percent proficient.

Through implementation of the TAP System, 29 schools across 13 districts in Texas significantly outperformed their matched schools in math and reading performance. Students at Slaton Junior High, for example, eliminated the achievement gap in math this year, reaching the state average.

Since implementing TAP, Coalfield School in Morgan County, Tennessee, increased ACT scores to the highest in the district's history with the

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*“The only people who develop human potential and character as a calling are educators. This puts the men and women who become teachers and principals in a position of unique power for helping to secure the future for young people.”* **LOWELL MILKEN** *Chairman & Founder*

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An ever-growing number of educators in communities across the country are putting in the hard work to develop and implement successful innovations such as the TAP System that lead to improved classroom instruction. Many of these educators are teaching in our highest-need schools and have little patience for delay. Here are a few examples illustrating the urgency and importance of this work in high-need schools across the country.

Hmong College Prep Academy in Minneapolis moved from the lowest five percent of schools

average ACT score steadily increasing the last four years. This also happened last year in Iowa's Saydel Community School District which similarly achieved the highest ACT scores in its history.

West Goshen Elementary School in Indiana moved from a D on Indiana's A-F grading system in 2011 to an A in 2016. One example of what this meant for students is the increase in proficiency rates in fifth-grade math from 39 percent to 72 percent.

We see urgency in the area of teacher preparation as well. Our NIET-Arizona State University partnership program shows that students are three

times more likely to graduate compared to the national average. Our work with ASU and Texas Tech University has resulted in over 100 highly proficient new teachers being placed in high-need schools across Arizona and Texas.

As we think about the next generation of educators who will serve in our most challenging schools and work with students who will face the greatest barriers to learning, we must provide them with the opportunity to maximize their potential. Yet what kind of career does teaching offer them?

Teachers tell us that even the most committed and inspired among them experience barriers to their continued growth and that of their colleagues, and that the job itself must be improved. They want the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues, to receive high-quality feedback for improvement, to have a common language around what strong teaching looks like and to have support from mentors or teacher leaders in their buildings—particularly for new teachers.

At its core, TAP creates this environment and builds the capacity and authority of educators in the school to make key educational decisions. There are structures and processes in TAP

that apply district and schoolwide—weekly professional learning, field-testing strategies, teacher leader roles, observations and a research-based instructional rubric. These structures and processes are animated by the needs of individual teachers and students in the classroom. Teacher and school leaders drive decisions about how best to deliver support to every teacher and student.

In this moment of opportunity and challenge, I see teacher and school leaders working as a team to be the most powerful catalyst for change. Such teams will enable schools to take full advantage of the new flexibility provided under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act to ensure results for students.

It is time for policymakers, communities, school boards and other leaders to elevate the voices of successful educators, and provide them with both the flexibility and funding to increase their effectiveness and their students' learning. Just as educators develop the human potential of their students, let us make a commitment to develop the human potential of educators themselves. They truly hold the future in their hands.

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