



NIET Louisiana Director Dr. Davita Lancelin coached leaders in East Feliciana last school year.

The Impact of LA BOLD: East Feliciana Public Schools

The Louisiana Building on Leadership Development (LA BOLD) project has created a coalition of high-need districts and schools working with NIET to increase equitable access to effective educators for students in high poverty schools. Funded through a 5-year 2016 federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant, NIET is providing leadership support and training across five public school districts — DeSoto, East Feliciana, Madison, Rapides, and St. John the Baptist — as well as six Orleans Parish charter schools.

East Feliciana exemplifies the impact this initiative has had. Located in rural Clinton, La., East Feliciana Parish has six schools and enrolls roughly 1,800 students. Of those, 62% are students of color and nearly 90% are economically disadvantaged. For years, the district has been plagued by high teacher turnover, ineffective instruction, and the inability to attract candidates from outside the area. Most of the neighboring parishes offer higher salaries.

LA BOLD has opened the door for

opportunity in East Feliciana. The community has welcomed NIET's partnership and has implemented policies and practices focused on developing teachers' instructional skills, tied to performance evaluation and compensation within each campus. Unique to East Feliciana is their motivation to build districtwide systems to ensure best practices are sustained beyond the tenure of the grant, or any one school or district leader. In this vein, the district piloted NIET's new Principal Leadership Series training and Building District Instructional Leadership services (see page 24) and set up principal professional learning groups focused on data-driven decision-making based on their own student and teacher performance. They also provided one-on-one principal support to ensure that school leaders were fully trained on providing feedback to their teacher leaders, including having competencies around the newly adopted high-quality Tier 1 curriculum.

This districtwide approach to developing instructional leadership



takes time, but East Feliciana Superintendent Keisha Netterville is investing in her school leaders to ensure that all students succeed: "We made the change to support principals because we needed to make sure that school leaders were equipped to support the teachers on their campus, leading to increased student achievement." And the needle is starting to move. Teacher retention rates are improving, a pipeline of leaders within the district is developing, and students are showing upward momentum in increasing their mastery. East Feliciana's work is far from complete, but their partnership with NIET through the LA BOLD grant is putting educators and students on the path toward sustainable success.