

Arizona Builds a Pipeline of Strong Instructional Leaders



School districts across **ARIZONA** partner with NIET to design innovative staffing practices that ensure every student has access to effective teachers. This work, which centers on teacher leadership, provides career opportunities for educators and

enhances the quality of classroom instruction as teacher leaders become experts in implementing rigorous literacy and math curricula. Over time, building the skills and knowledge of teacher leaders strengthens the leadership development pipeline.



Arizona Excels with NIET's Strategic Staffing Support

NIET is at the forefront of innovative staffing in Arizona, with a proven track record of improving student outcomes by increasing teacher effectiveness. Core to this approach is a model for creating systems that grow talent through teacher leadership roles. The successes achieved by NIET school and district partners over more than two decades of work are direct results of this investment and evidence of its value.



NEW STATE FUNDING HELPS DISTRICTS STRENGTHEN MATH INSTRUCTION

Recognizing the impact a comprehensive approach has on improving instruction, the Arizona Department of Education has turned to NIET to support districts in addressing student learning gaps in math. The Direct Student Services grant funds the addition of math coaches in districts where students struggle to meet academic standards. As a nationally recognized provider of support for the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), NIET partners with districts to ensure their math instruction leads to learning growth for students.

The diverse needs of students and the high expectations of a rigorous curriculum require not just initial training on curricula, but ongoing shoulder-to-shoulder support to improve instructional practices. This initiative creates new resources to support effective teachers in sharing their expertise and building a pipeline to grow the strongest teachers into leaders at the school and district levels.

As seen in NIET partnerships across the state, team-based structures led by teacher leaders address challenges with the traditional teacher role, reducing isolation, creating career pathways, increasing teacher retention, and increasing opportunities to collaborate, learn, and grow.

INNOVATIVE STAFFING CREATES A CAREER PATHWAY FOR TEACHERS

NIET's impact is also evident in the growing number of leaders who build their skills and knowledge in teacher leader positions and go on to lead their schools and districts. After serving as a teacher leader in Gadsden Elementary School District #32, Omar Duron became the superintendent of Somerton School District No. 11. He credits an investment in people — not programs — for fueling his success in growing teacher and school leader effectiveness and student achievement.



“It is essential to recognize the leadership potential in every teacher and encourage their continued professional growth, as it expands their ability to positively impact more students.”

OMAR DURON
SUPERINTENDENT,
SOMERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 11





SPOTLIGHT:

Celebrating Excellence in Gadsden Elementary School District #32

For its focus on supporting excellent instruction and improving student performance, Gadsden Elementary School District #32 was recognized with NIET's 2025 District Award of Excellence for Educator Effectiveness. Gadsden serves a unique and diverse community, with 100% of students qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunch and 98% of students entering the district enrolled as English language learners. All students in Gadsden receive high-quality instruction from educators who benefit from continuous, tailored feedback and coaching.

Gadsden's 15-year partnership with NIET has helped the district establish a cadre of teacher leaders who, alongside school leaders, facilitate job-embedded professional learning and provide teachers with individualized coaching and support. Gadsden's teacher leadership model has created a pipeline of local instructional leaders who are prepared to support their colleagues to meet students' academic and developmental needs. Gadsden's educators and students have thrived as a result of the district's investments in teacher leadership.

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**TEACHER
LEADERSHIP
POSITIVELY
IMPACTS
TEACHER
RETENTION**

95%

**OF SCHOOL LEADERS
REPORTED THAT
TEACHER LEADERS
HAD A POSITIVE
IMPACT ON TEACHER
RETENTION.**

**NIET's Arizona partners
use teacher leadership as a
strategy to increase teacher
effectiveness and improve
retention. When a school
has teacher leaders, teachers
feel more supported and
are more likely to return
year after year.**