

Arkansas Invests in Educators to Reach Student Learning Goals



ARKANSAS is investing in teachers and leaders by improving feedback, strengthening coaching, and offering additional compensation to help districts achieve ambitious student learning goals. NIET is the top provider of statewide training for lead teachers to earn designations as mentors for new

teachers, and for master teachers to earn designations as coaches for math and literacy. The high-impact training and on-site support being provided for teacher leaders and instructional leadership teams reinforce years of successful partnerships between NIET and the state's rural districts.



Arkansas Aligns Expectations and Support for Educators

Over the last three years, Arkansas has made historic changes to K-12 education, including new requirements for third grade literacy, increased teacher compensation, opportunities for teacher leadership, and more accurate and useful feedback for teachers. NIET has played a key role in supporting the state to build alignment between these initiatives, so that each piece of the policy framework leverages and reinforces other elements.



PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY FEEDBACK ON INSTRUCTION

NIET is supporting the Arkansas Department of Education through a three-year initiative to improve the feedback teachers and principals receive and build greater consistency in evaluations. The initiative trains evaluators to conduct high-quality observations and provide strong coaching feedback, supporting improvements in practice and creating a path for educators to qualify for merit-based recognition. Training will be based on the state's Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) and Leader Excellence and Development System (LEADS).

INCENTIVIZING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Arkansas created two teacher leadership designations, lead and master educator, with statewide training and on-site coaching for these roles. NIET is the largest trainer of lead and master educators in Arkansas, having supported over 1,300 teachers to earn a Professional Educator Designation, and is currently training the first cohorts of math and English language arts coaches to earn the Master Professional Educator Designation.

The state approves providers of teacher leader training and credentialing, creating quality control measures to ensure consistency in the skills of teacher leaders. This growing cohort of trained teacher leaders provides high-quality mentoring for new teachers and coaching in math and ELA. Teacher candidates must be placed in the classroom of a lead or master teacher, providing a strong incentive for a school to have certified lead or master teachers in place. In addition, if a student fails to meet the state's third grade

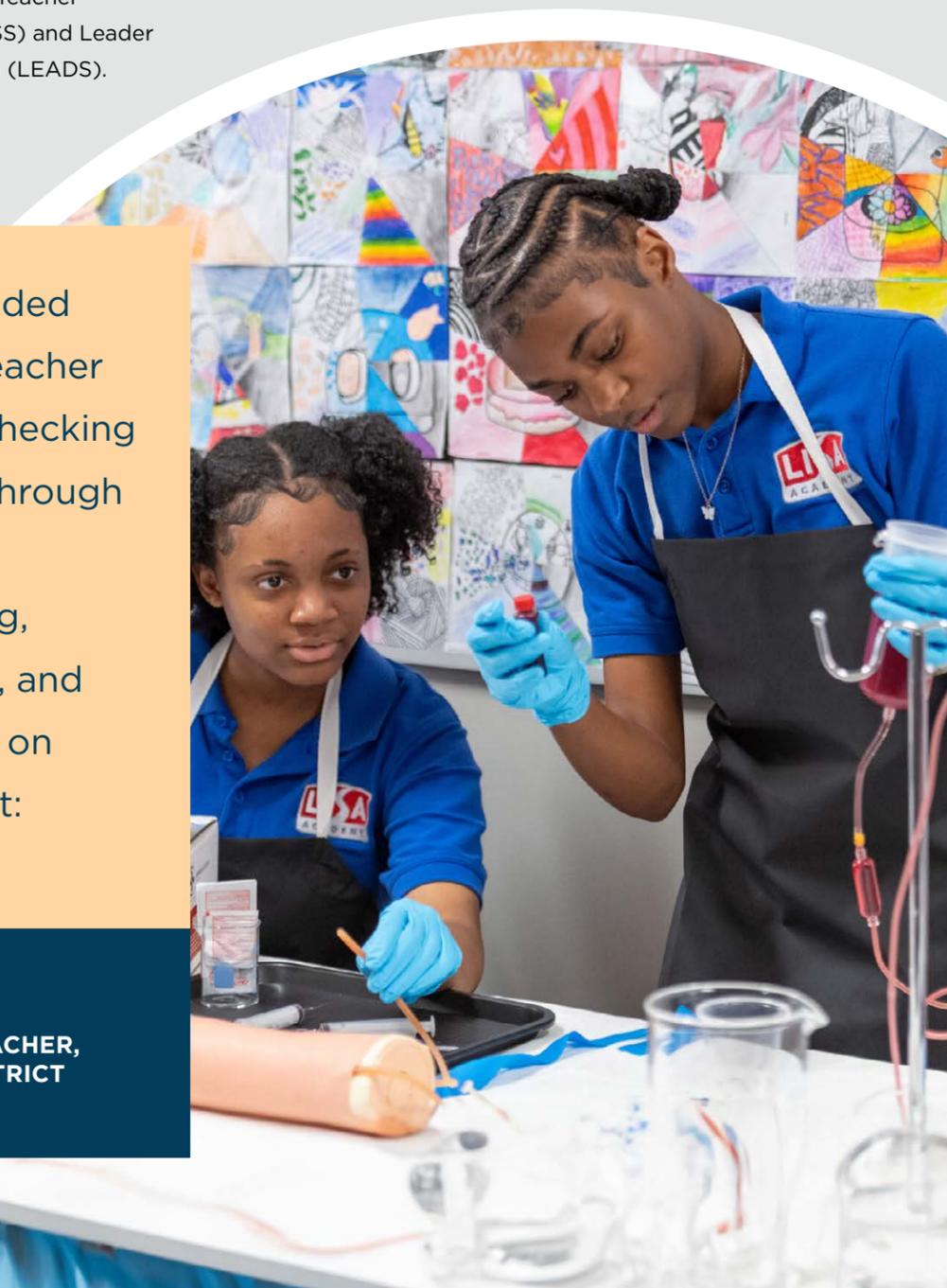
promotion requirements, that student can satisfy the requirements by being placed in a master teacher's classroom. Teacher leaders can earn state merit pay in multiple ways: through their own classroom impact, for teaching in a high-need and rural area, and for teaching in a shortage area.



“The training reminded me that being a teacher is not just about checking boxes or getting through the day. It’s about constantly growing, supporting others, and keeping our focus on what matters most: helping kids.”

REBECCA ELLIOTT

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER,
RIVERVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT**





SPOTLIGHT:

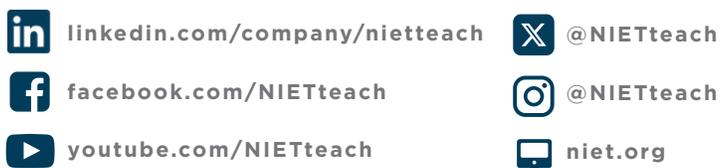
Commitment to Teacher Support Earns International Recognition

In 2025, Cross County Elementary Technology Academy (CCETA) in Cross County School District was selected as one of 10 international finalists for T4 Education's prestigious World's Best School Prizes in the Overcoming Adversity category, which celebrates schools that see challenges and obstacles as opportunities to learn and grow.

CCETA was recognized for its dedication to excellence in teaching and learning and for its efforts to build resilience and lifelong skills for success among students. As a rural school with limited access to resources, CCETA has found ways to ensure its students and educators can thrive. A long-standing partnership with NIET helps build instructional excellence and strengthen collaboration and support for educators.

Over the past five years, the school's teacher retention rate has reached 96%, thanks to CCETA's commitment to teacher support and coaching.

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**NIET IS THE
TOP CHOICE
FOR LEAD
AND MASTER
EDUCATOR
DESIGNATION
TRAINING**

1,300

**LEAD AND MASTER
PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATOR
DESIGNATIONS
EARNED**

Teachers across Arkansas participate in NIET's training and on-site support to earn lead and master educator designations. NIET is proud to have supported over 1,300 teachers in earning designations since the program began, making it the largest provider in the state.