



## A LETTER FROM THE CEO

# Dr. Candice McQueen

### Partners:

Thank you for the tremendous welcome you have shown me as I have started with NIET! It is a privilege to join the talented NIET team and to work with state and district leaders, higher education faculty, and teachers and principals across the country. The collective mission you and I share — to improve the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders so they will in turn support and accelerate growth of every student — has been my life's work. It motivates me every day and truly is the tie that binds all of us together.

I know effective teaching is the absolute best way to drive student success, so there is no other organization I would rather be leading than one where this belief is matched with exceptional outcomes.

I grew up in Tennessee, and I started my career in education in the same way many of you did: as a classroom teacher. Throughout my career — first as a teacher in elementary and middle schools in both Tennessee and Texas, then as senior vice president and dean of the College of Education at Lipscomb University in Nashville, and most recently as commissioner of education for the Tennessee Department of Education — every success I have seen has come back to great teaching. During my time as dean, Lipscomb was recognized annually as the state’s top-performing educator preparation program based on our first-year teachers’ student growth and achievement results — results that were accelerated as we integrated the state’s teacher evaluation model, which was rooted in rubrics from NIET. At the department, I witnessed the dramatic difference that the TAP System has brought to schools across the state — schools that now experience our top level of growth every year and which have earned Tennessee a spot as one of the fastest improving states in the country.

Educator excellence that supports student success is and always will be at the heart of what we do at NIET. Each of our suite of services — the TAP System, educator effectiveness best practices, teacher leadership opportunities, school improvement solutions, and partnering with higher education — is structured around our core belief that every child deserves an effective educator, in every classroom, every day. And what we do is working. We have seen our TAP System lead to dramatically improved outcomes for students and change the trajectory of entire schools. Those of you who have worked with us have seen firsthand the kind of impact that high-quality products, feedback, coaching, and support can bring to teacher development and student growth.

### **YOUR SUCCESS IS THE REASON WE ARE EXCITED TO THINK BIGGER.**

This spring, we will be celebrating what our educator partners have accomplished, re-centering on what we do each day, and planning for how we can build off what works. We are thinking about how we can



tailor our support based on individual school needs and meet you where you’re at. We are looking for new partners and places where we can come alongside what is happening to take it to the next level. My dream is for every teacher to be fully equipped to meet their students’ needs, to use data and student work to drive next steps, and to work alongside peers who help them to go even further. That is no easy goal, but it’s the right one for our kids.

Over the past few weeks, many of you have welcomed me into your classrooms and clusters to see the work you are leading, hear the questions you are asking, and witness how you are making decisions about addressing students’ needs. I look forward to continuing to be in the field and hearing from you about your ideas on how NIET can continue to improve how it serves our educators. I believe we have an incredible opportunity as an organization to deepen our partnerships and support even more educators in their practice, build institutional capacity, and strengthen teacher leadership opportunities. And I want your ideas about how we can do that well.

I am committed to serving you each day with energy, enthusiasm, and excellence. Please reach out to me if you ever need anything. My email address is [cmqueen@niet.org](mailto:cmqueen@niet.org).

*Best,  
Candice*