

# In Conversation:

CHRISTINA JAMISON | GRAND PRAIRIE PRINCIPAL FELLOW

*Christina Jamison has served as an educator and master teacher in both Dallas ISD and Grand Prairie ISD, and she is now part of NIET and Texas Tech's Leadership Instruction for Teachers (LIFT) program, which prepares aspiring leaders through job-embedded, on-site training in addition to learning the theoretical framework for effective instruction and leadership. The LIFT program is an example of NIET's ongoing work with higher education institutions and their district partners to create a common language and understanding of what effective instruction and school leadership look like, promote feedback to teacher and principal candidates through a research-based rubric, and strengthen these partnerships so that district schools that need it most will have access to the highest-quality educators. Through the LIFT program, Christina serves as a principal fellow and administrative intern at John Nance Garner Fine Arts Academy in Grand Prairie.*

## How has NIET shaped your career as an educator?

NIET is the reason that I became a master teacher. Prior to 2011, I had only experienced being a classroom secondary math teacher. During the seven years of coaching and evaluating teachers from the lens of a master teacher in two different districts, I was able to label best instructional practices and expand my reach of student success from about 100 students to many more. Because of NIET, I also found the value of teacher support. Since I was the teacher who did well, I was left alone. I rarely had anyone in my classroom giving me constructive criticism or praise. The master teacher role showed me the importance of modeling and co-teaching with an educator that is knowledgeable about best practices. While in this role, I also got to see a glimpse of all of the variables in running a school – good and bad – which encouraged me to advance my career to administration.

## What is something you received through NIET's support that you wish every educator had, and why?

The NIET support from our regional coaches was the best thing. The individualized training based on the

needs of our district and school was extremely helpful.

I feel like that model was directly aligned to the master teacher-career teacher design, which every educator should experience. Professional development specific to the needs of a teacher's campus and culture is the most beneficial to teacher growth and student achievement.

## What have you learned through being a teacher leader?

I have learned several things. First: Good teaching is intentional. Many teachers who struggle with classroom management and/or academic rigor do so due to their lack of planning. I never valued planning as much as I do since working alongside teachers. Secondly, a well-run school that is academically sound and culturally proficient is collaborative throughout. Collaboration in leadership improves buy-in to schoolwide systems and initiatives. Collaboration in classroom instruction leads to greater student achievement. Finally, a growth mindset is important for the work of an educator. Without this principle, educators cannot adapt and adjust to the ever-changing needs of today's students and their families. We all must be willing to learn and try new things. ●



“Being able to be a leader of professional development on my campus has allowed my students to grow exponentially.”

*Christina Jamison shared her experience as a teacher leader and growth into administration during a panel at the U.S. Capitol.*