



GROWING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

In 2020, in addition to the new efforts to support teachers virtually, NIET expanded and created new partnerships. In Urbandale Community School District, Iowa — pictured here during a previous school year — NIET helped to train teacher leaders to serve as coaches and instructional leaders. This is part of NIET's partnership with the Iowa Department of Education to support the state's Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) System and the Iowa Instructional Framework resource. Nearly 100 districts have now adopted the framework, and NIET expanded its support in 2020-21 through offering deep dive trainings and other opportunities for educators to further explore effective instructional practices.

New Partners Embrace NIET's Framework for Success

With new challenges come new opportunities. 2020 has been proof that, with high-quality investments in structures that build capacity for success, effective teaching can happen in any modality.

Alaska: The Alaska Council of School Administrators received a 3-year federal Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Incentive Program grant in partnership with NIET and four rural, high-need districts: the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, Yukon-Koyukuk School District, Alaska Gateway School District, and Nenana School District. The project, called Increasing Performance and Retention in Alaska's Rural Schools, will support the creation of structures for professional learning communities, school leadership teams, and educator observation, feedback, and evaluation. It will serve approximately 475 educators and 2,500 students through both in-person and virtual coaching and training.

Arizona: Phoenix's Roosevelt Elementary School District, serving 9,000 students, is partnering with NIET on a Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) School grant from the Arizona Department of Education. The project focuses on 15 out of the district's 19 schools that have been identified by the state as needing support. NIET provides principal coaching and teacher leader support, and is helping to transform professional learning communities into data-driven decision-making hubs based on the individual needs of teachers and students.

Indiana: NIET partnerships in Whitko, Muncie, Martinsville, Michigan City, and Nettle Creek received approximately \$2.5 million collectively through the Indiana Career Ladder program, which will help the districts to establish instructionally focused teacher leadership structures. "Our teacher leaders are facilitating positive change as they demonstrate what's possible with students through shared leadership and collaboration within their buildings and across the district," said Cathy Bildhauser, director for K-12 curriculum and instruction for Michigan City Area Schools.

Iowa: Iowa entered its second year of implementing the Iowa Instructional Framework, based on the *NIET Rubric*, with 96 districts in the 2020-21 school year. Investments in both the Iowa Instructional Framework and the Teacher

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Leadership and Compensation System have helped districts define teacher leader roles and responsibilities, deepen coaching conversations based on the real-time needs of teachers and students, and foster student ownership of learning. "We are creating a culture where teaching is a team sport and a public act," said Dr. Crista Carlile, director of teaching and learning for Urbandale Schools. "The formal teacher leadership roles are the conduit to achieving this culture."

Michigan: Beginning a new state partnership, NIET became an approved provider for Michigan's Teacher Leader program. The program was developed to address the state's teacher shortage by better recruiting and retaining effective educators while creating positive and supportive school cultures for them to thrive. The NIET program involves a combination of teacher leadership training and experience to equip teachers to mentor their peers effectively and drive school growth.

Louisiana: NIET has deepened statewide partnerships in Louisiana in a variety of ways (see page 14 for more on the statewide training on virtual instruction).

Starting in the 2019-20 school year, NIET began a new partnership under the Louisiana Mentor Teacher Initiative to equip elementary school teachers to support yearlong residents and other new or developing teachers. When NIET's trainings and support were piloted in Assumption Parish and Algiers Charter, educators called it a "double win." Aspiring mentors are not only working toward an official state certification, but are also sharpening skills in their daily work.

Additionally, NIET is developing rubric-based tools and resources the Louisiana Department of Education can use statewide to help educators further understand what effective teaching looks like in a virtual environment, and more work is on the horizon for summer 2021.

South Carolina: NIET, in partnership with the University of South Carolina and the Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity (BranchED), received a 3-year, \$2.5 million federal Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant to build the capacity of South Carolina's principals and school leaders and advance equity. The focus of support will be on equipping school leaders to increase students' access

to high-quality STEM education and social-emotional learning opportunities. The grant will support training in six high-need districts, reaching 150 administrators in 95 schools who serve a total of 58,000 students.

For more on support in South Carolina, see page 16.

Texas:
Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA): NIET was selected as a provider of the Teacher Incentive Allotment, a teacher designation and strategic compensation program that allows districts to receive up to \$32,000 a year for effective educators based on multiple measures of skill and performance. NIET will deliver a wide spectrum of services to help districts

design TIA plans, including assisting with the creation of local designation systems, application for funding, readiness, teacher observation and appraisal, data analysis, compensation, change management and communication, and teacher leadership and support systems.

Mentor Program Allotment (MPA): Through the Texas Mentor Program Allotment, NIET is partnering with 16 districts to create systems that pair beginning teachers with mentor teachers and develop high-quality in-person and virtual training to support them. Mentor teachers learn how to coach new teachers on making data-driven improvements in instructional practice, using T-TESS (the Texas



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Teacher Evaluation and Support System) as a tool. The MPA provides \$1,800 per new teacher, and NIET's 2020 MPA partnerships serve over 300 new teachers. For more on what this program looks like in practice, see page 23.

Resilient Schools Support Program: Houston ISD (the nation's seventh

largest school district), along with Grand Prairie ISD, Spring ISD, and San Felipe Del Rio CISD, are partnering with NIET on Texas' Resilient Schools Support Program. NIET will work with each district to deliver world-class remote learning education in 2020-21, in alignment with on-campus instruction. The support will include

ongoing, customized coaching and professional development.

Tennessee: In addition to its work with TRAIN (see page 22), NIET has entered into four new partnerships through its School Improvement Solutions initiative, including work with the Tennessee School for the Deaf, the Tennessee School for the Blind, Haywood County Schools, and DeKalb County Schools. NIET is also part of a new grow-your-own grant with Tennessee Tech to establish and strengthen teacher pipelines in six districts.

Below: Educators and students at Algiers Charter in New Orleans are still enjoying the chance to learn in person, even if it looks a little different. *Photo courtesy of Algiers Charter School.*

