

In Conversation:

JOHN WHITE | FORMER LOUISIANA STATE SUPERINTENDENT

John White was Louisiana superintendent of schools from January 2012 to March 2020. During that time, he launched Louisiana Believes, the state's plan to ensure every child is on track to a college degree or a professional career. White worked to unify the state's early childhood system, modernize curriculum, professionalize educator preparation, provide pathways to prosperity for all high school graduates, and provide families with expansive school options. In 2019, Louisiana students ranked first in the nation for improvement in 8th grade math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Over the decade spanning Superintendent White's tenure, Louisiana's growth outpaced the nation, ranking in the top 10 states for improvement on every NAEP test.

How has NIET changed the teaching landscape in Louisiana?

NIET has helped school leaders build strong systems for teacher collaboration, goal-setting, and observation and feedback. It has also created clear pathways to leadership for excellent teachers. Additionally, school systems are recognizing how to create incentives for teachers who take on additional roles and how to attract, support, and retain the most effective teachers and leaders in rural and high-need schools.

What makes NIET different from other partners?

NIET is a teacher-centered organization that uses research to help schools establish structures for professional growth and advancement. NIET's systematic approach benefits educators and students.

What should NIET focus on in our next 20 years?

Educators are struggling to ensure that all students, including those who are not yet at grade level, are able to succeed. Master and mentor teachers could provide much-

needed support to ensure that teachers are equipped to meet all students' needs.

Why did Louisiana pursue a partnership with NIET, and how has the state built off our collaboration through policy and statewide initiatives?

Since 2003, school systems throughout Louisiana have been partnering with NIET to strengthen educator support and establish structures for professional learning. From the federal Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant awarded in 2010 to the state-supported partnership in Caddo Parish, Louisiana school systems have used the TAP System to build teacher leaders who are equipped to coach and support their peers.

In October 2018, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education passed policies that established credentials for teacher leaders, including a mentor teacher ancillary certificate to ensure those serving in the role of mentor teacher are well prepared to support others. NIET became a state-approved provider of mentor teacher training in August 2019. ●

