



## RESULTS AND EVIDENCE

*NIET's partners are continuing to show success, no matter the learning environment. This spring, NIET was able to surprise long-time partner Duplessis Primary School in Ascension Parish, Louisiana, with the 2020 Founder's Award. Duplessis Primary has built a teacher leadership pipeline that is helping students to meet and exceed benchmarks, becoming a top gains honoree on the Louisiana state report card.*

# Recognizing and Rewarding Excellence

## 2020 Founder's Award

Each year, NIET recognizes five schools as finalists for the Founder's Award and recipients of \$10,000 — with one school receiving the title and \$50,000. Founder's Award recipients are selected by NIET based on their efforts to make instructional excellence the cornerstone of school improvement.

Founder's Award finalists are traditionally celebrated at our National Conference. In a sign of the times, this year we recognized the finalists via Zoom and then announced the winner: Duplessis Primary School in Ascension Public Schools! It is a testament to the leadership and staff of these five schools that the sense of pride, community, and celebration was just as strong virtually as it would have been in-person.

## 2020 Founder's Award Winner: Duplessis Primary School, Louisiana

For the past four years at Duplessis Primary School, teachers and leaders have worked with NIET to build a truly collaborative environment. This foundational support and the unifying motto of "The Patriot Way" have helped Duplessis students — of whom half are minority and 61% are economically disadvantaged — excel. On the most recent

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*Principal Jennifer Board*

### DUPLESSIS PRIMARY SCHOOL



Louisiana state exam, students' academic index score increased from 62.5 in third grade English language arts to 89.5 in fourth grade. In social studies, teachers grew those same students from 45.5 in third grade to 64 in fourth grade. Overall, Duplessis achieved a state letter grade of "B" in 2018 and 2019, and during the same time, the school earned an "A" in student progress.

"Fidelity to the NIET framework is the key to our success," said Principal Jennifer Board. "We are a highly reflective culture. Without the framework, we wouldn't be where we are. Since Duplessis became an NIET partner school, we have continued to grow every single year."

### 2020 FOUNDER'S AWARD FINALISTS

#### Chinle Elementary School, Arizona

Chinle Elementary is located at the heart of the Navajo Nation in northeastern Arizona. When NIET first partnered with the district in 2011, Chinle Elementary was identified as a Focus School with a letter grade of "D." Now campus leaders and coaches, with support from NIET specialists, discuss and refine practices, facilitating conversations that raise expectations for both teachers and students. Student performance data shows this regular support has had significant positive outcomes. Chinle Elementary earned a "B" in 2019 and was just shy of an "A." Since the introduction of Arizona's new statewide assessment in 2015, students in grades 3 through 6 have increased their passing rate for English language arts by 31 percentage points and in math by 24 percentage points. Across the district, students' growth has propelled the Chinle Unified School District from one of the lowest-performing to the highest-performing reservation district in the state.

#### Desert View Elementary School, Arizona

Desert View's campus sits along the U.S./ Mexico border, with a nearly 100% Hispanic/ Latino population and more than a third of its students classified as English language learners. The school, in its ninth year of working with NIET, uses the TAP System as a tool for establishing a consistency in structure and follow-up support as well as for differentiating instruction. This focus has led to the school's fifth straight "A" rating from the state. In 2019, Desert View earned a spot in the top 5% in the state for the percentage of students passing AzMERIT and in the top 10% of growth. From 2015 to 2019, students consistently achieved more than a year's worth of academic

#### CHINLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



#### DESERT VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



## SLATON HIGH SCHOOL



growth. Teachers, in addition to students, thrive at Desert View. Many have advanced through leadership opportunities, creating a continuous pipeline of talent from the community.

"All of this [support] has made me a better leader," Principal Meredith Nelson said. "I hold all accountable, especially myself. Our motto is: 'The Race for Excellence Has No Finish Line.' We live that every day."

### Slaton High School, Texas

Since starting full implementation of the TAP System in 2018-19, teachers and leaders in Slaton High School have worked together as a cohesive and communicative unit with a focus on supporting student growth and achievement. Teachers have started teaming up to analyze assessment data and develop plans to target support for students who repeatedly fail, helping students to take ownership over their learning. As a result of these refinements, the school has seen improved performance on state exams and improved state accountability ratings, and has expanded the number of students leaving Slaton High School with industry-based certifications and college credit hours. Slaton High received a state designation for outstanding academic growth in 2019. Slaton's district partnership with Texas Tech has allowed Slaton High to grow its own pipeline of leadership and attract new teachers.

## SLAUGHTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



### Slaughter Elementary School, Louisiana

Through NIET support structures adopted in the 2017-18 school year, students at Slaughter Elementary School — of whom about 60% are economically disadvantaged — are making gains. Teachers know they are supported by a leadership team that is able to tailor support for success, and students are supported in taking ownership of their learning and individual growth. Between 2018 and 2019, third-grade students increased their ELA index score from 65.4 to 94.5. Within the same time frame, fourth-grade students moved their ELA index up from 65.4 to 88.6. Students with disabilities improved their index by 10.7 points. Slaughter Elementary received a "B" state letter grade in 2018 and 2019 and an "A" for student progress.

"Students began taking ownership of their learning and individual growth and displayed confidence in their mastery of grade-level standards and daily objectives," Principal Kimberly Glascock said. "Master Teacher Jennifer Thornton was paid the biggest compliment when a parent said, 'My child likes doing math again.'"