



# Partnerships Help Develop Highly Effective Educators On a Large Scale

\$23 million in federal Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grants will fund NIET, Arizona State and Texas Tech to work with new and veteran teachers



“To keep America competitive, and to make the American dream of equal educational opportunity a reality, we need to recruit, reward, train, learn from, and honor a new generation of talented teachers. But the bar must be raised for successful teacher preparation programs because we ask much more of teachers today than even a decade ago.”

—U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan

In 2009, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan urged universities preparing new teacher candidates to make student outcomes the “overarching mission that propels all of their efforts.” At that time, the U.S. Department of Education projected that in 2014, *up to one million new teaching positions* would be filled by new teachers.

Recognizing this challenge to ensure a highly skilled teaching force, NIET reached out to institutions of higher education to place student teachers and new teachers in schools implementing TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement. Today, NIET is working with two of the country’s most forward-thinking teacher preparation programs—at Arizona State and Texas Tech universities—to introduce the TAP Rubric into the teacher preparation curriculum.

Arizona State University was the first to incorporate the TAP Rubric into its teacher preparation program—nationally recognized for its emphasis on classroom experience. TAP’s “job-embedded” professional support, led by trained and certified teacher leaders in the school and customized to the needs of the students and teachers, is closely aligned with ASU’s vision. The TAP System’s approach is a sharp departure from “traditional” professional development, which is often delivered in one-time seminars or workshops. The classroom experience within this strong structure of support, coupled with the in-depth knowledge of the TAP Rubric, provides ASU’s teacher candidates with a firm foundation for their first year of teaching.

To spur the creation of more initiatives that tie professional development to teacher effectiveness, in 2013 the federal government established the SEED program—Supporting Effective Educator Development—funded through Title II.

ASU was a natural partner in NIET’s application for the funds. The university wanted to build on its early success with TAP by focusing the new effort on recruiting and developing effective STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) teachers in high-need schools. Similarly drawn to TAP’s proven track record in schools, Texas Tech University joined NIET in a project to help increase the number of effective teachers in some of the state’s high-need districts, strengthen clinical experiences, embed more effective evaluation and support into the preparation program, and enhance professional development using video technology.

“While these two SEED initiatives directly impact about 5,000 educators,” noted NIET President and CEO Dr. Gary Stark, “their reach is far greater as they will help two of the most cutting-edge teacher training programs in the country impact the next generation of teachers.”

In addition to improving the pipeline of new teachers, the grant projects will also provide induction support for first-year teachers and enhance professional development for all teachers in partnering districts—creating a seamless transition from academic theory to clinical practice.

The partnership with the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University, *Planting the Seed: Engaging, Educating and Advancing Teachers in STEM and Common Core*, will prepare 214 new teachers in STEM fields over the next three years by implementing recruitment strategies designed to increase participants from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM.

NIET and ASU believe that bringing 214 new, highly skilled middle and high school math teachers to the workforce has the potential to impact more than 180,000 middle school and high school students in just the first five years following project completion. Schools that have experienced shortages of highly qualified middle school and high school STEM teachers will receive well-prepared teachers with continued professional support.



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—Dr. Mari Koerner,  
ASU Teachers College Dean

Additionally, *Planting the Seed* will enhance professional development, strategies, and support in writing instruction for more than 4,000 undergraduate teacher candidates and in-service teachers. This focus will allow all teachers to collaborate more strategically toward schoolwide goals while addressing the rigorous Common Core Writing Standards.

Both teacher preparation and professional development will take place within the iTeachAZ model, which more than

doubles the amount of time undergraduate teacher candidates spend in classrooms. Teacher candidates in the undergraduate program will spend one full day per week in internships in the first year of the program and four days per week in the final year, greatly increasing their classroom experience.

According to ASU Teachers College Dean Dr. Mari Koerner, “This project will continue to ensure that Arizona State University is preparing educators who are classroom-ready on day one, as well as provide tailored, evidence-proven professional development to more than 4,000 teachers across Arizona.”

This new initiative builds on the foundation of the work ASU and NIET are engaged in to integrate the TAP Teaching Standards into the teacher preparation program at Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College. Together these innovative projects will support teachers over the course of their career, from their initial preparation program to their work in the classroom. TAP schools should ultimately experience a significantly higher level of fidelity to TAP school implementation and teacher instruction in literacy and STEM.

The second project with Texas Tech University, known as *TAP Connect*, will reach approximately 750 teachers and leaders in 18 TAP schools, as well as 90 new teacher candidates at TTU, thereby increasing the number of effective educators in high-need schools across five Texas districts. The project will enhance the traditional model for the TAP System by embedding TAP strategies into the university’s teacher preparation curriculum and its certifications in Literacy/ Writing, STEM and Leadership. Overall, the project will strive to improve teaching behaviors which, in turn, will have a positive impact on student achievement.

*TAP Connect* will also help increase the impact of the traditional TAP System through the use of video technology. The project will offer a 21st Century technology-enabled, competency-based approach to ensuring TAP school fidelity to implementation. This will support teachers as they build a conceptual understanding of best teaching practices that have a positive impact on student achievement.

While the *TAP Connect* project will occur across Texas, the technology within the model promises easy and affordable scaling across the nation. TTU College of Education Dean Dr. Scott Ridley is excited by the prospects. “The combination of NIET’s proven impact on students and teachers in the field with TTU’s innovation and technology at the university preparation level,” he said, “will create a powerful new model for educator preparation and school reform in America.”