



New Teacher Center's Response to Louisiana Department of Education School Redesign Request for Information

New Teacher Center understands that the Louisiana Department of Education seeks to “co-design” the state’s ESSA school improvement plan with school systems and external partners. New Teacher Center is uniquely qualified to assist Louisiana in transforming its lowest-performing schools by virtue of our nationally-recognized, targeted expertise in teacher effectiveness—a necessary element of the school improvement that Louisiana intends to achieve.

Background

New Teacher Center (NTC) has over 18 years of experience as an organization dedicated to improving student learning by guiding a new generation of educators. We have made it our goal to overcome challenges teachers and students face by providing all educators and school leaders with the support and resources necessary to succeed from their first day to their last.

From beginning as a small program within the University of California-Santa Cruz (UCSC), NTC has grown into a national nonprofit with unequalled reach—we embrace mentoring and coaching that combine high academic standards with authentic, trusting relationships. Teacher retention, student achievement, and teacher efficacy have all improved under our comprehensive approach to professional learning.

Our mission is to improve student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. We are recognized across the nation for high-quality coaching, mentoring, and induction programs. At the heart of this work is the conviction that when we focus on teachers and school leaders, we positively impact student learning and create positive, sustainable change in our partner districts.

The quick hit, isolated, sporadic, and often-irrelevant opportunities educators receive to learn and improve simply do not work. Unfortunately, this type of professional development is all too common and represents a sizeable financial investment, yet does not move the needle for their practice, or for student learning. NTC takes a very different approach with our model that provides lasting impact on teacher effectiveness and student success through practice-changing, job-embedded and personalized opportunities to grow with the ongoing support of well-prepared mentors, coaches, and school leaders.

We are aligning how we work with mentors, coaches, and school leaders so that the way they support teachers in their school districts is cohesive and consistent. We do this at the district level, on the ground with mentors and coaches who support teachers in their classrooms, and at the school level with school leaders. Through our systems approach, we support educators to confidently and effectively lead their classrooms with standards-aligned instruction that helps build every student’s academic, social, and emotional learning.

NTC’s mission and work align with Louisiana’s education needs, specifically in:

- **Recognizing the urgent need to dramatically improve persistently low performing schools:** NTC believes that every student should succeed—not just those in well-endowed districts. We recognize that new teachers and administrators are often placed in difficult assignments in low performing

schools. This can be extremely discouraging for novice teachers, causing many to leave the profession after only a few years. It is these schools in particular, with low-income and minority students, that need high-quality teachers and school leaders the most.

- **Increasing students’ levels of proficiency:** A recent independent evaluation of our model through our federal i3 Validation grant has proven that after 2 years of NTC support, students of NTC-supported teachers in grades 4-8 demonstrated 3 to 5 months of additional learning in reading, and 2.3 to 4.2 additional months of learning in math, compared to students of control group teachers.
- **Supporting rural communities:** In addition to our face-to-face mentoring, NTC offers online mentoring and professional development—a unique and scalable response to the challenges of increasing teacher retention, accelerating teacher effectiveness, and improving the achievement of students in rural areas.
- Finally, we take a collaborative approach to our work with district partners, which is **in direct alignment with Louisiana’s desire to find partners that embrace collaboration.**

Track Record

During the 2015-2016 school year alone, we supported more than 40,000 teachers, and more than 7,500 mentors and coaches—improving the learning of over 3.4 million students nationwide.

NTC is one of the few organizations in the country with programs that have demonstrated statistically significant gains in teacher practice and student learning. NTC’s federal i3 evaluation assesses teacher practice and student learning within our induction programs using comparison groups. The results have helped us to identify the highest leverage supports and teacher practices needed to advance student learning. The evaluation results find that a higher percentage of NTC-supported new teachers demonstrate proficiency in engaging students in learning, compared to those teachers who are not supported by NTC. Furthermore, we have also found that NTC-supported new teachers also demonstrate greater proficiency in using assessment in instruction, a skill essential to driving a continuous cycle of improvement in practice. These results are notable not only because they are statistically significant, but also because the evaluation includes two large, urban districts. NTC’s i3 evaluation examined induction programs in Chicago Public Schools (IL), Broward County Public Schools (FL), and Grant Wood Area Education Agency (IA).

Table of statistics for the large, urban districts in the i3 federal evaluation study:ⁱ

District	% Non-white	% Hispanic	% FRPL ⁱⁱ
Chicago PS, IL	91	45	85
Broward CPS, FL	76	27	60

ⁱ Data source: SRI International Evaluation, 2016

ⁱⁱ Free and reduced price lunch

Model

NTC’s model improves student learning by driving outcomes at the district, school, and individual teacher and classroom levels. We build high-quality mentoring and coaching systems to facilitate a culture supportive of great teaching and learning, while increasing leadership capacity. On a macro level, we advocate for policies promoting teacher effectiveness.

Just as we do with all of the districts and schools that we partner with, **we will differentiate our services to meet the unique needs of Louisiana’s districts and schools, right from the start.** For example, in the initial stages of implementation, our staff take the time to collaborate with program leadership to develop a unique implementation plan. Such plans include a set of goals and corresponding deliverables

that fit the needs of the district at hand—supporting not only program implementation but program leadership development as well. Our professional development and our tools are contextualized and integrated to support each district’s unique framework and expectations.

Critical to our model’s success is our distinctive, collaborative approach to partnering. We build long-term partnerships with districts who describe us as engaging with educators, rather than imposing our work on them. We strengthen districts from within, supporting partners every step of the way to put results oriented programs in place, combining context-specific knowledge with our extensive understanding of research and best practices.

NTC also strongly believes in the power of teachers learning from other teachers, so at multiple levels within a district we build communities of practice fostering collaboration, continuous improvement, and teacher leadership. We also believe strongly in evidence-based improvement, and we place data analysis at the core of our work. Our model includes formative assessment tools, data systems, surveys, and data consultation. We replicate the same elements and philosophies in our work across multiple levels in a district. This ensures an integrated and experience within a community: what we model with instructional leaders is what those instructional leaders do with teachers. Unlike the fragmented development that teachers usually experience, this approach creates distributed leadership within a district that is key to achieving systems change and driving greater impact.

Thus, in alignment with the unique needs and challenges of Louisiana’s schools and districts, we hope to partner with Louisiana to “co-design” the state’s ESSA school improvement plan and implement systems that increase teacher effectiveness, thus ensuring that all students have access to schools that prepare them for college and career.

Our ideal partner school or district is one where we would have an aligned vision regarding the development of teacher effectiveness through on-going, job-embedded learning across a system. In addition to sharing a vision, our ideal partner is willing to dedicate the time and resources needed to implement the shared vision including engaging in program leadership capacity building, stakeholder communication, and regular analysis of data with an assets-based mindset.

NTC’s experience working with other third party providers is vast. We have a rich history of partnering with other nonprofits and education agencies to collaboratively implement high quality work. For example, in Hawaii, we’ve partnered with the Center for Educational Leadership to jointly support school leaders across the state. In Chicago, we’ve collaborated closely with other service providers for new teachers including Teach for America, AUSL, Chicago Teaching Fellows, and others to ensure that supports provided to teachers are coherent, strategic, and aligned. In New York City, we partnered with the Danielson Group to support NYCDOE’s teacher evaluation and support efforts.

The type of support (from the state, district, or school partners) that would enhance our success in Louisiana includes support that sets an intentional focus on enhancing teacher effectiveness through aligned systems of instructionally focused professional learning. For example, through the help of our partners, establishing clear roles and dedicated time for instructional leaders and teachers to engage in ongoing learning and coaching cycles would accelerate the success of our work.