

In Conversation

CHRISTY WALL



Clinton Elementary School, Clinton City Schools, Tennessee

Christy Wall is the Assistant Commissioner of Academics and Instructional Strategy at the Tennessee Department of Education. Her work with students, teachers, and administrators focuses on continuous improvement and instructional impact.



How has NIET changed the teaching landscape in Tennessee?

NIET has a long history of partnership with districts in Tennessee and involvement in state-level educational improvement. NIET delivered statewide training for thousands of educators and leaders on the statewide TEAM evaluation system, which builds on NIET's evidence-based teaching and learning standards.

More recently, NIET has been supporting districts to implement high-quality curricula in reading and math as a partner to districts in the Tennessee Literacy Instruction Networks, Early Literacy 2.0 Regional

Networks, and Tennessee Math Implementation Grants for districts supporting the adoption of new high-quality instructional materials (HQIM).

As teachers begin to use new high-quality instructional materials, NIET is training school and teacher leaders to coach teachers to build their knowledge and skills, connecting a new curriculum to the effective practices needed to deliver it so that every student is engaged in the learning.

What is it about this approach that has had the greatest impact?

While our focus is on delivering high-quality instruction, the systems and processes districts and schools need to build their capacity to lead this work are absolutely critical.

NIET has helped district and school leaders build strong systems for teacher collaboration, goal-setting, and observation and feedback. These structures are the foundation for ongoing improvements in instruction and student learning.

What makes NIET different from other partners?

Building the capacity of others and creating systems that generate growth and improvement are the hallmarks of NIET's approach. Their highly skilled staff and content experts add capacity to district leaders and provide sustained support with the implementation of HQIM.

What should NIET focus on in our next 25 years?

First, NIET should continue to provide support and instructional leadership capacity for building-level leaders and instructional coaches, all of whom support teachers. Second, implementation practices for new HQIM across content areas will need to be prioritized.

This work is complex and difficult to sustain; however, if we can invest in the ongoing support of those who are implementing and monitoring instructional change, we will be able to maintain momentum. ●