

In Conversation

PAT MAPES

Pat Mapes is a member of the Indiana State Board of Education and superintendent of Hamilton Southeastern Schools. He previously served as superintendent of Perry Township Schools, where he led the district to academic success through a focus on high-quality classroom instruction.



What is it about the TAP System and NIET's approach to building educator excellence that makes you want to help schools implement it?

In my experience, NIET is a game-changer because of the way they elevate teachers into instructional leadership. Our focus is on growing students, but to do this, we need to grow teachers. Aligning our systems to help teachers grow and improve generates excellence in the classroom. It creates a continuous cycle of improvement as more teachers want to join a team that helps them to be the best teachers they can be. And this culture of growth builds a district-wide community of

learners. As a former classroom teacher and principal, I appreciate how TAP creates a shared language around great classroom teaching and aligns professional learning and classroom coaching to that shared vision.

How have you seen the creation of teacher leadership roles impact educators?

Over the years, I have seen the impact of creating teacher leadership roles — it brings teachers into instructional leadership of schools while at the same time creating a pipeline to grow our strongest teachers into leaders at the school and district levels. My experience is that teacher leadership roles are the foundation of a strong collaboration and feedback structure that attracts, grows, and retains effective educators. Teacher leaders are then in a prime position to take on administrative roles and bring with them a wealth of instructional knowledge and expertise. Helping every teacher to grow with this system of support leads to significant and sustained improvements in student outcomes.

What makes NIET different from other partners?

Indiana districts were among the earliest partners for NIET, and what we learned in our districts helped NIET to build and strengthen the practices, structures, and protocols for instructional excellence over the last 25 years. Most importantly, these partnerships helped teachers and students to make measurable improvements.

What do you think NIET should focus on in our next 25 years?

I hope NIET continues their focus on instructional practices as they move forward. I truly believe that in order to raise the profession of education, all teachers and administrators need to work together to identify best instructional practices and duplicate them in their schools. There still is nothing more important than having a great instructional teacher in front of students each and every day. NIET is great at partnering with schools and developing great instructional leaders and should keep up this important work. ●