

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

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KEY POINTS

Writing is essential to learning.

The NWP is already shown to be effective, innovative, and cost-efficient at improving writing.

The NWP is able to accomplish this because it has built up a national infrastructure of linked sites that build leadership and deliver local services.

Federal support is vitally important to the NWP's ability to continue improving writing.

WRITING IS ESSENTIAL TO
LEARNING

Writing is inherent to learning

“Whether inscribed on rock, carved in cuneiform, painted in hieroglyphics, or written with the aid of the alphabet, the instinct to write down everything from mundane commercial transactions to routine daily occurrences to the most transcendent ideas—and then to have others read them, as well as to read what others have written—is not simply a way of transferring information from one person to another, one generation to the next. It is **a process of learning and hence, of education.**

Ariel and Will Durant were right when they said, ‘Education is the transmission of civilization.’”

Vartan Gregorian, President, Carnegie Corporation of NY
Foreword, *Writing to Read: Evidence for how Writing Can Improve Reading*. Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010.

In the 21st century, writing is *digital writing*

“I think that **digital literacy** has three parts.

The first is the ability to **use information well**—to find it, consume it, analyze it, and leverage it to solve a problem.

The second part of digital literacy is the ability to use media and digital technologies to **communicate and collaborate effectively**...How do you tell a story or communicate your message using different media? How do you organize and collaborate effectively with your personal network?

Third, and arguably the least understood, is the development of **digital citizenship**. Just as we have always worked with students to play well on the playground, we need to make sure they learn to behave well in an online environment.”

Karen Cator, director of the Office of Educational Technology,
U.S.D.O.E. *Educational Leadership*, February 2011

Federal investment is needed to improve literacy instruction

“It is time for the federal government to invest fully in comprehensive literacy initiatives to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared with the advanced literacy skills necessary to succeed in college and careers. The pending reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—currently known as No Child Left Behind Act—offers an opportunity to address a fundamental weakness within public education—the lack of systemic literacy instruction.”

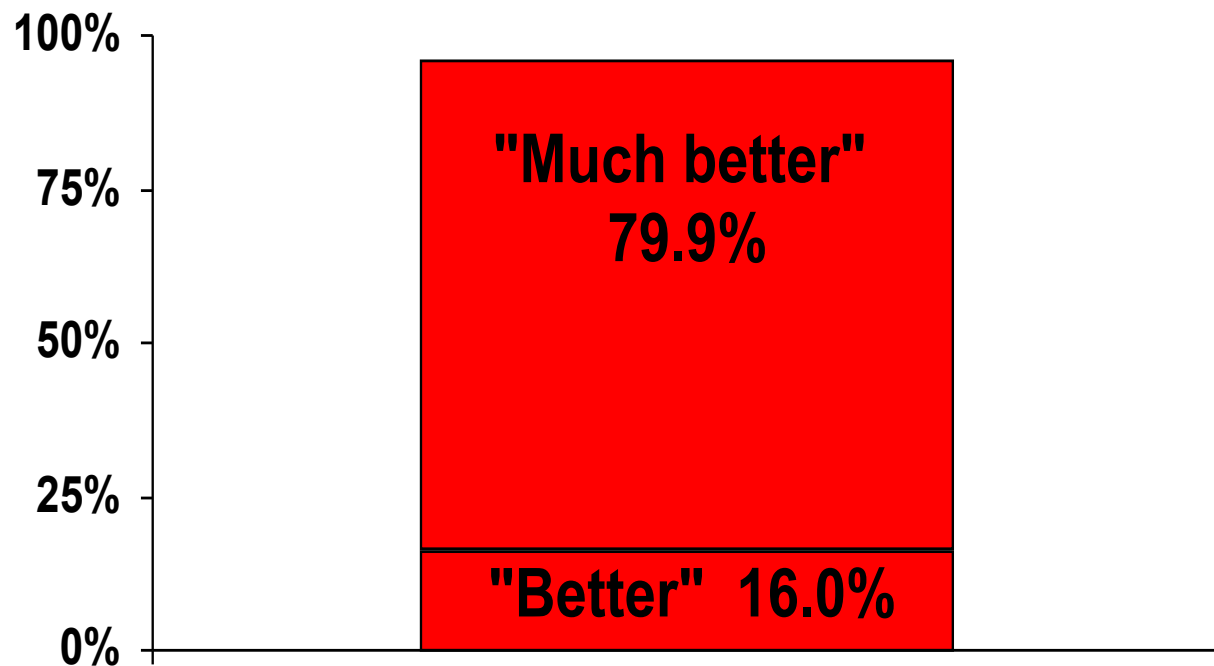
Alliance for Excellent Education, Policy Brief, September, 2010. *The Federal Role in Confronting the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy*

THE NWP IS ALREADY SHOWN
TO BE EFFECTIVE, INNOVATIVE,
AND COST-EFFICIENT AT
IMPROVING WRITING

The NWP provides high quality professional development

Surveys for over 10 years show
consistent results

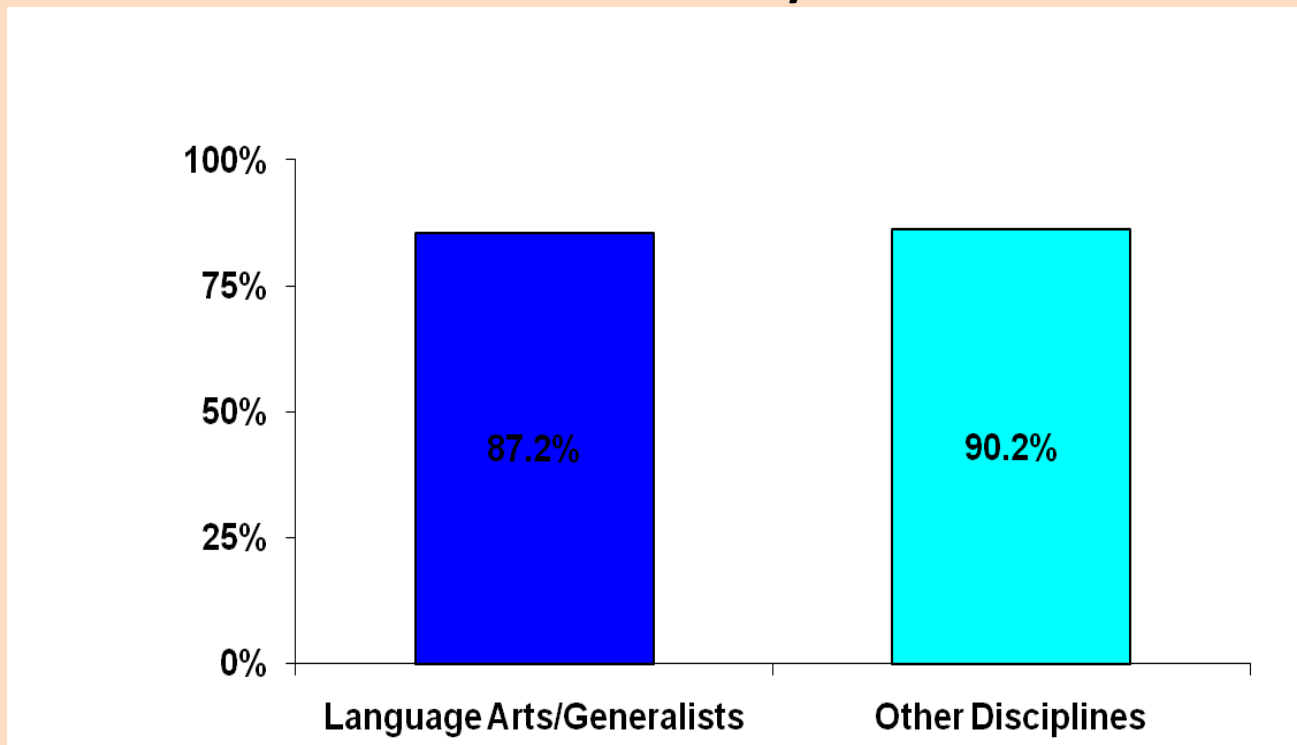
96% of teachers at NWP institutes say NWP is better than other professional development



(Source: Survey of summer institute participants 2010)

NWP institutes are equally effective for teachers of all content areas.

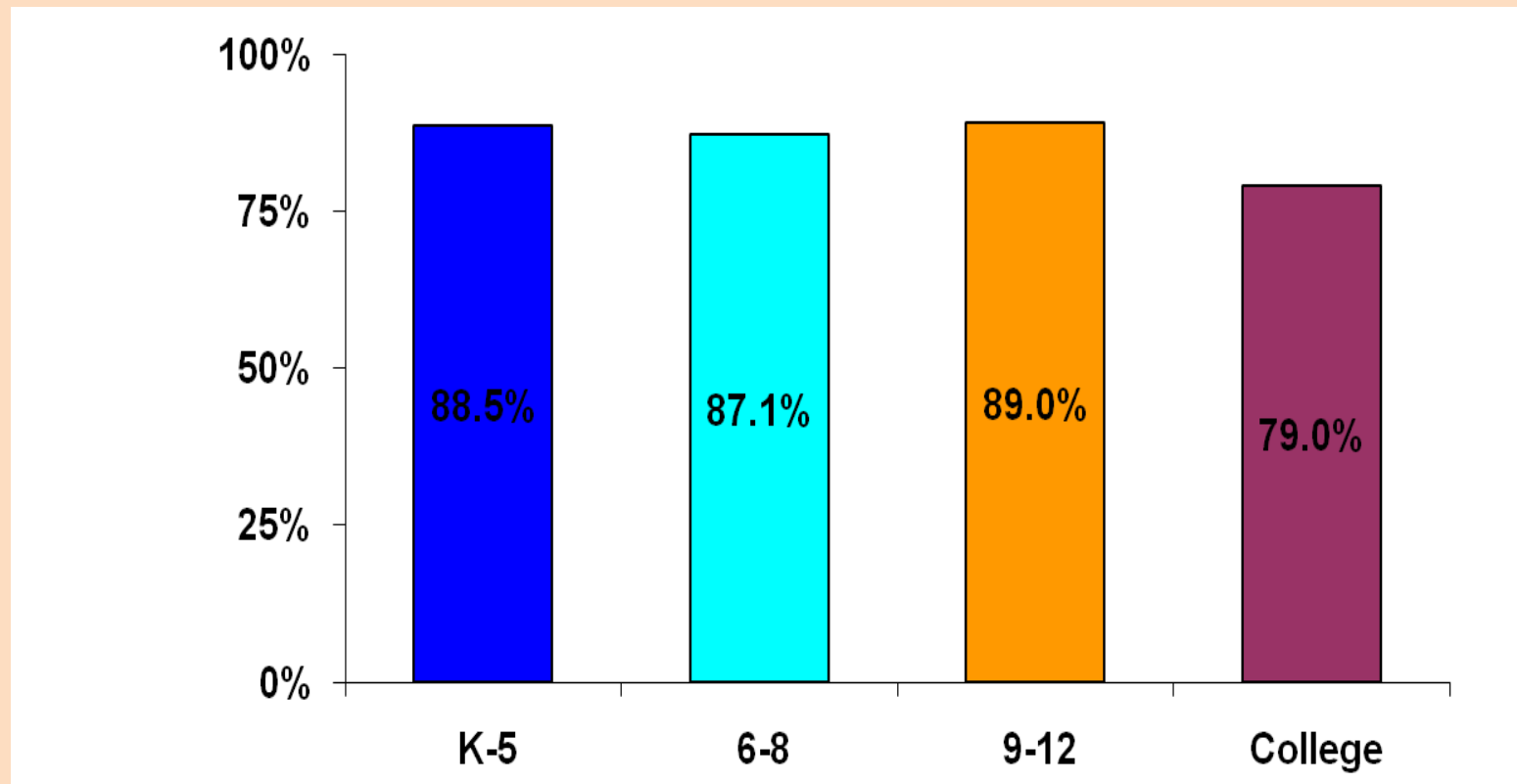
“The WP has enabled me to teach a wider range of students more effectively.”



(Source: Survey of summer institute participants 2010)

NWP institutes help teachers of all grade levels improve their teaching

“The WP has enabled me to teach a wider range of students more effectively.”



(Source: Survey of summer institute participants 2010)

96% of teachers at NWP institutes say that what they learn translates into improved writing skills for their students



(Source: Survey of summer institute participants 2010)

NWP teachers improve writing more than comparison teachers

Annual NWP Local Site Research
Initiative (LSRI) studies from 2006-
present

16 LSRI studies in 7 states over 4 years

FIGURE 2

Comparison of Student Writing Change from Pre to Post Assessment

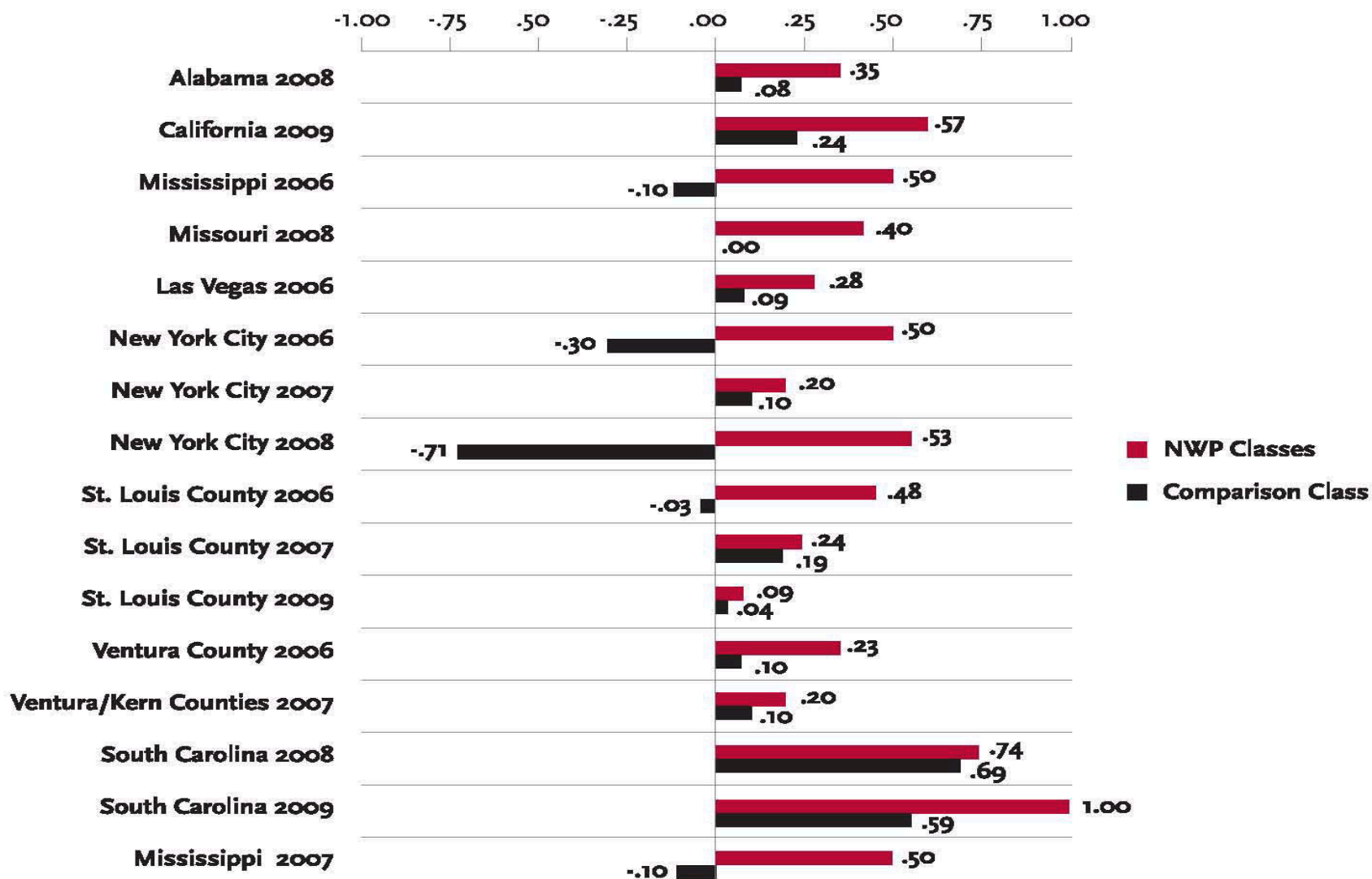


FIGURE 2 illustrates the amount of change in writing performance exhibited by program and comparison students in each of the 16 studies, measured holistically. In each case, program students show growth while comparison students often show little or no growth in their writing performance and, on occasion, show a decline in writing performance.

The NWP promotes local and national **innovation**

Case in point:

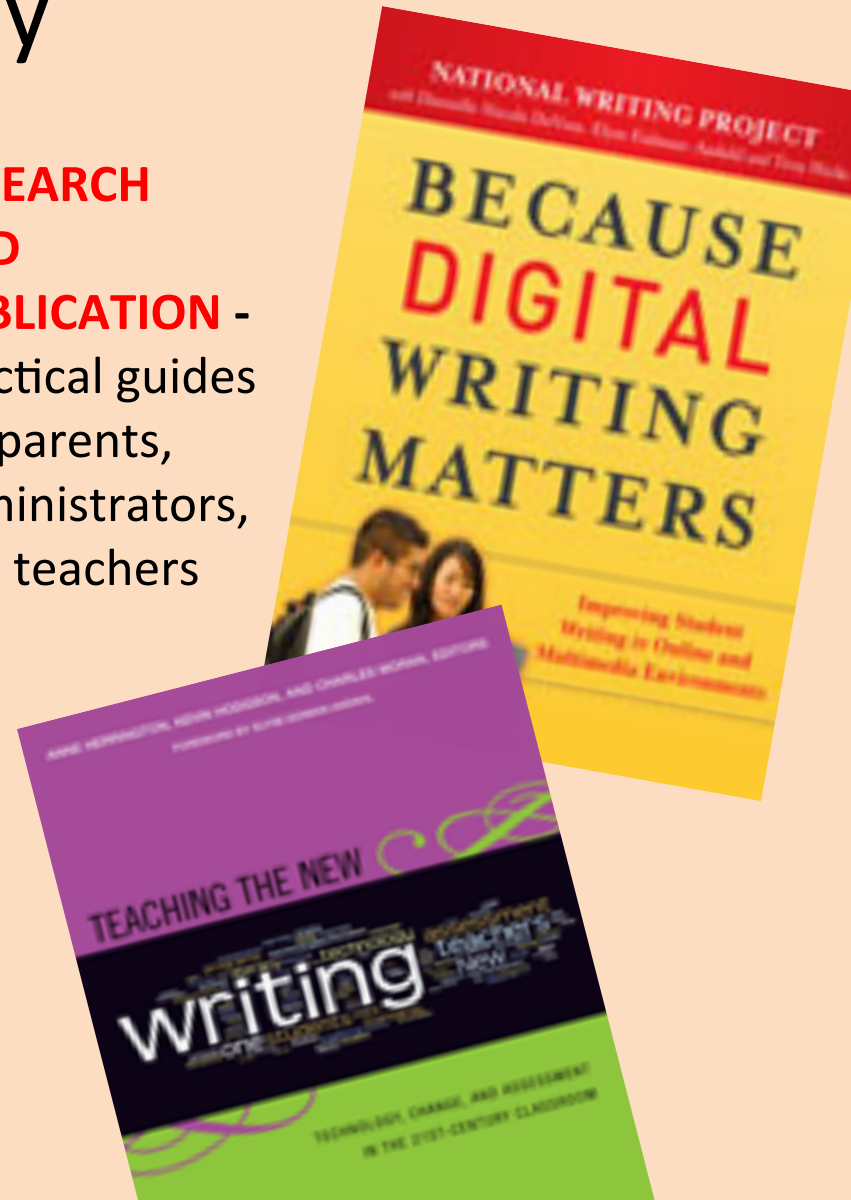
The Technology Initiative

The NWP is leading the way in digital literacy

HUMAN CAPITAL— National network of 200 local **Tech Liaisons** developing sites and sharing resources nationally for 10 years.

ON-LINE RESOURCES— growing bank on digital literacy: writing, teaching, learning

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION - Practical guides for parents, administrators, and teachers



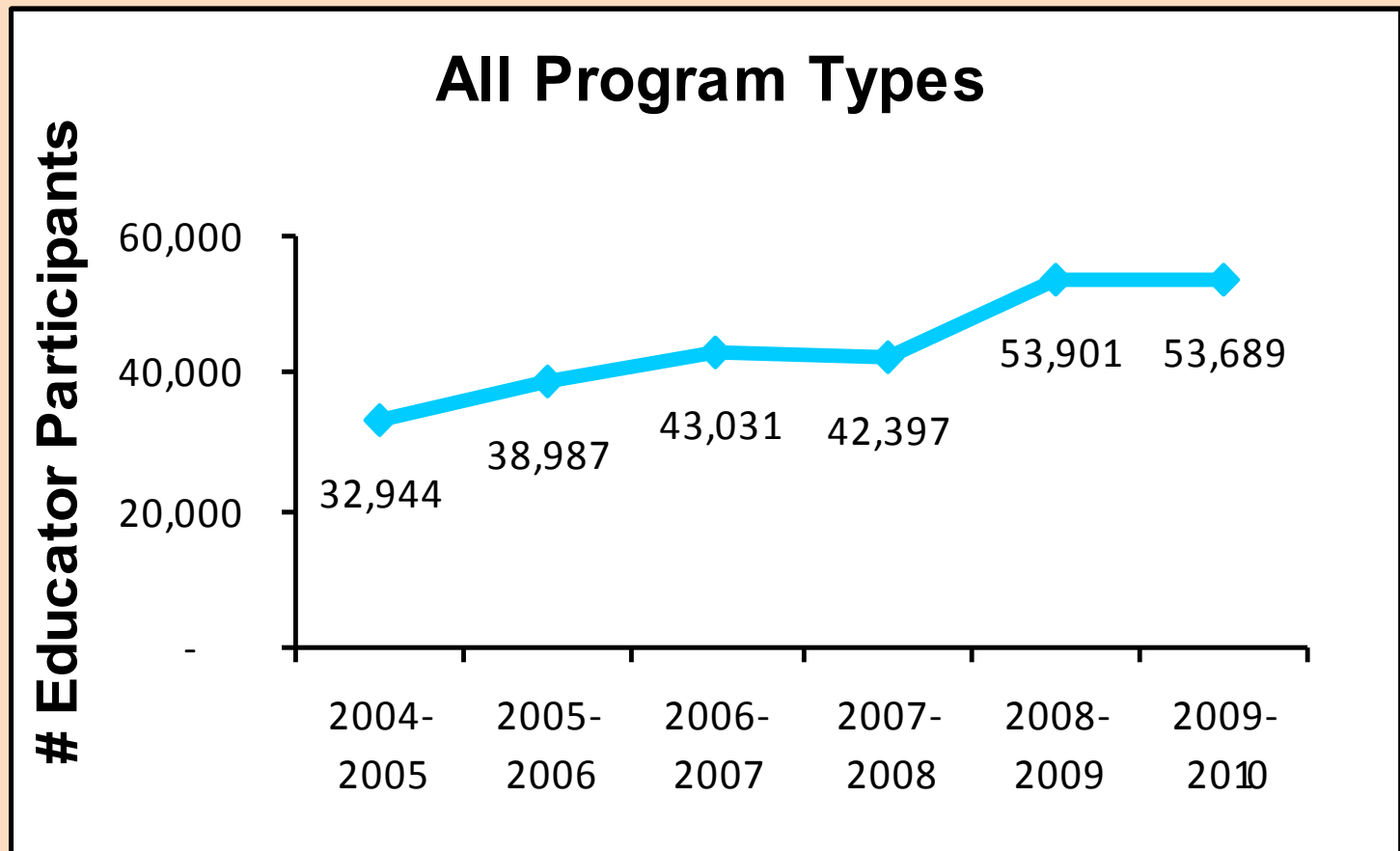
NWP sites provide professional development on technology for writing

In 2009-10 alone—

- More than 53,000 teachers across the nation participated in programs that included uses of technology for writing.
- More than 17,000 local youth, parents and community members participated in NWP programs that included using technology for writing.

The NWP grows in capacity to provide PD on digital literacy

In 2009-10, 61% of all NWP contact hours for teachers were in programs including uses of technology for teaching writing.



The NWP is cost efficient

Fiscal crises call for efficient leveraging of federal resources. The NWP does that.

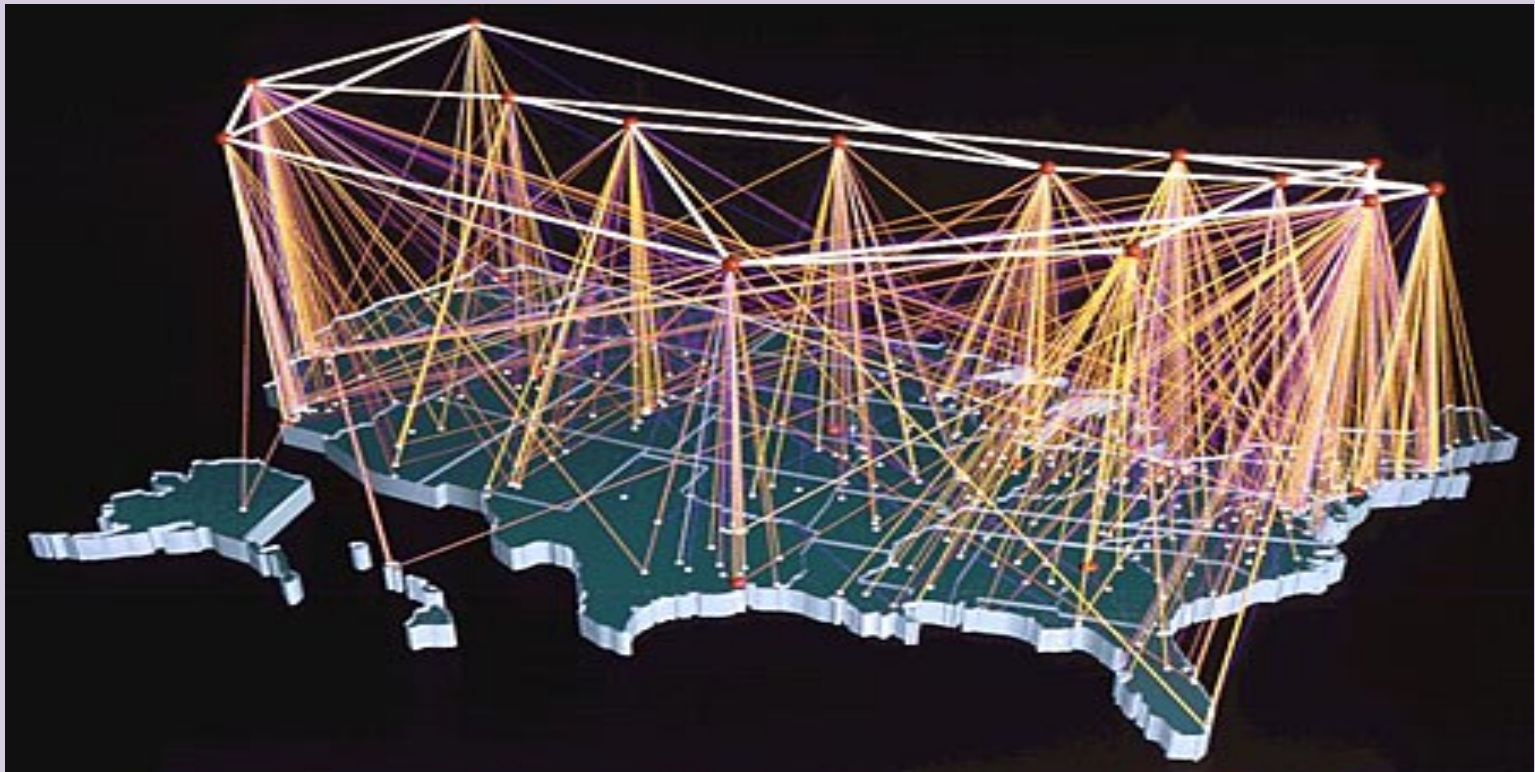
In the NWP, federal funds are nearly doubled by university, state, and local school funds.



THE NWP IS ABLE TO
ACCOMPLISH THIS BECAUSE IT
HAS BUILT UP A NATIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE OF
NETWORKED SITES

The NWP is not just a project. It is an already-working national infrastructure

More than 200 linked sites that span all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands



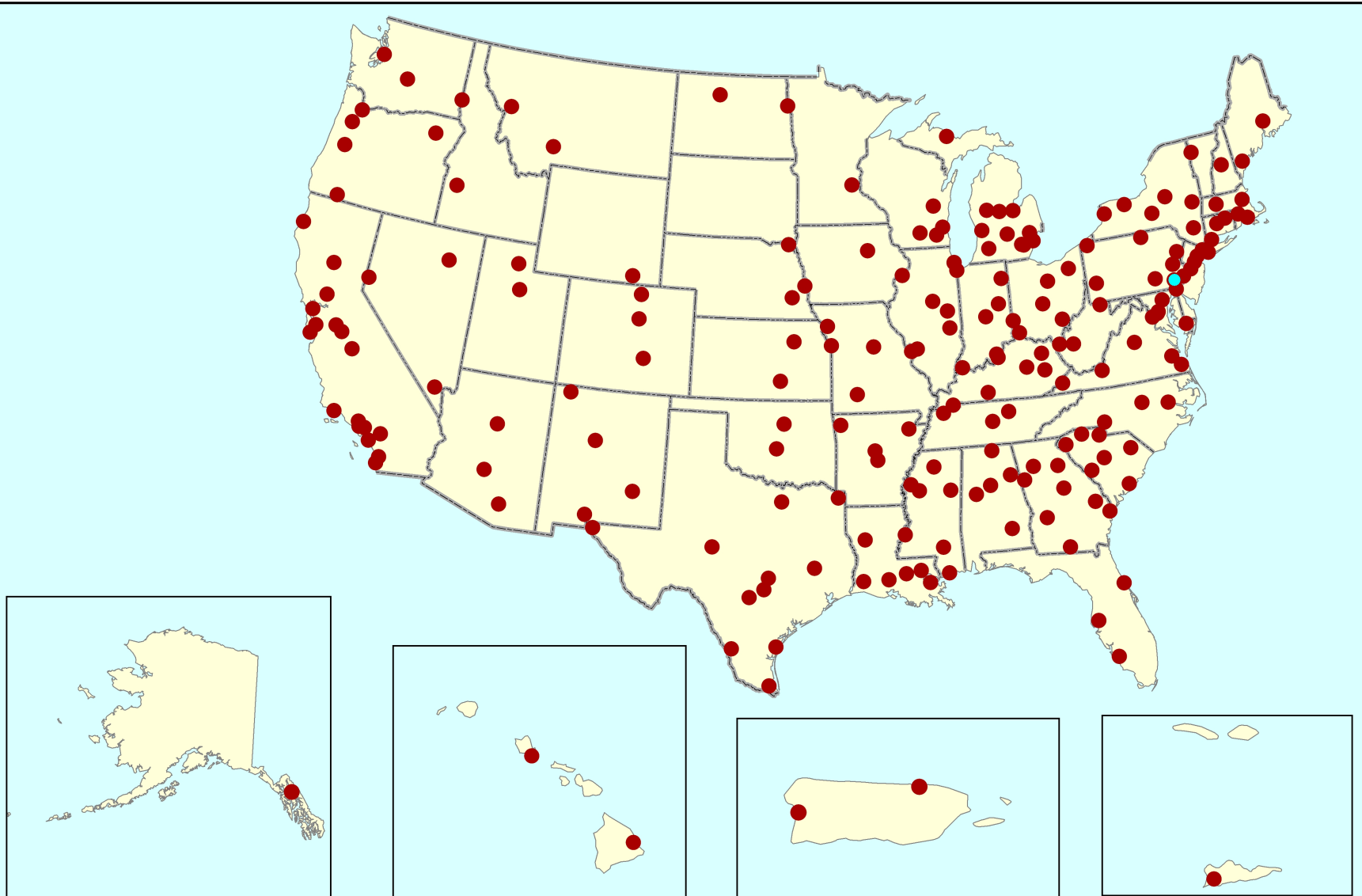
The NWP is working at a national
scale

Building leadership and providing
local services to teachers and schools

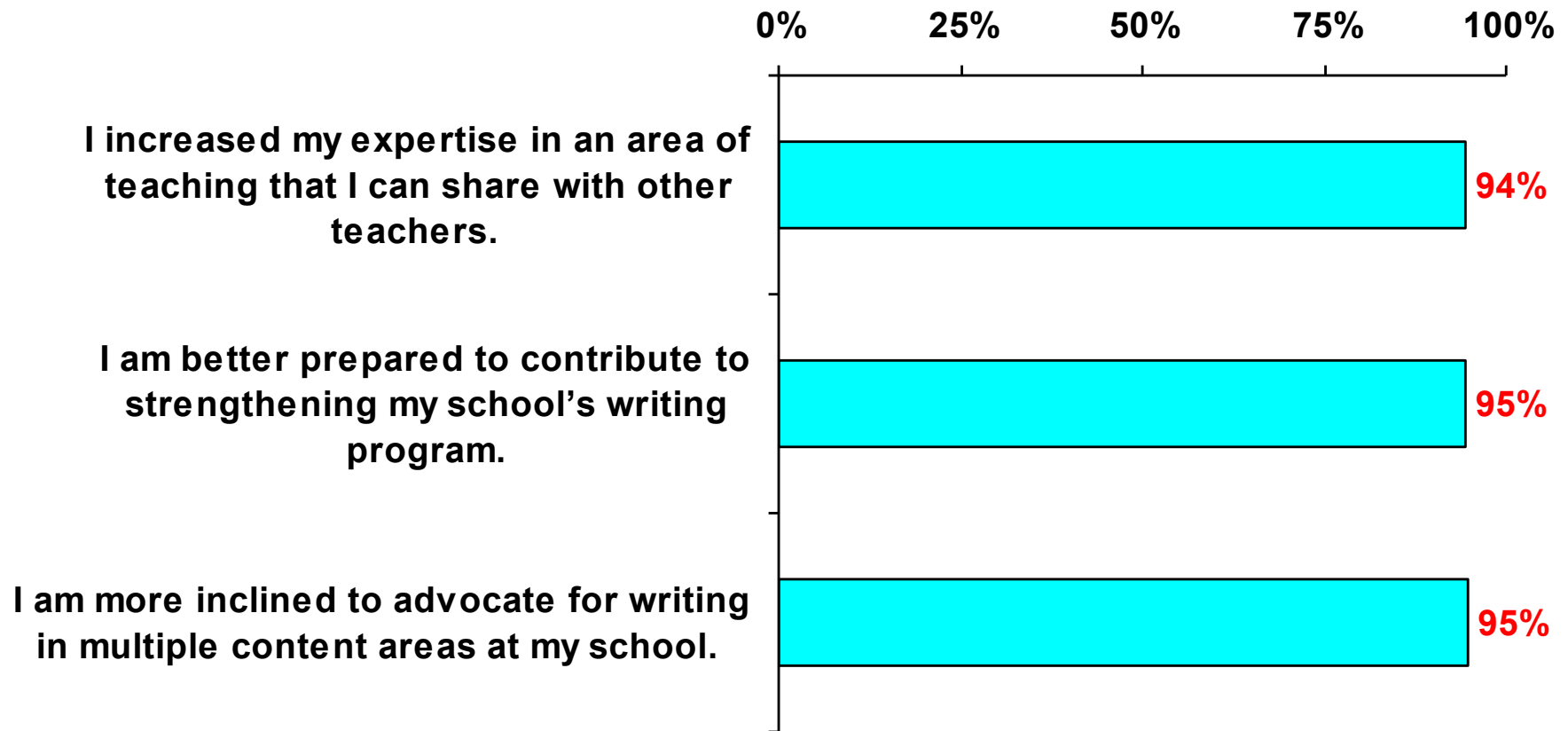
The NWP is the only professional development project that serves teachers at a national scale

- Supporting more than 200 local sites
- Offering nearly 8,000 programs in each year
- Serving nearly 120,000 teacher-participants each year

76% of all K-12 teachers are within 50 miles of a local NWP site and professional community



NWP institutes prepare 3,000 teachers annually to serve as leaders in improving writing

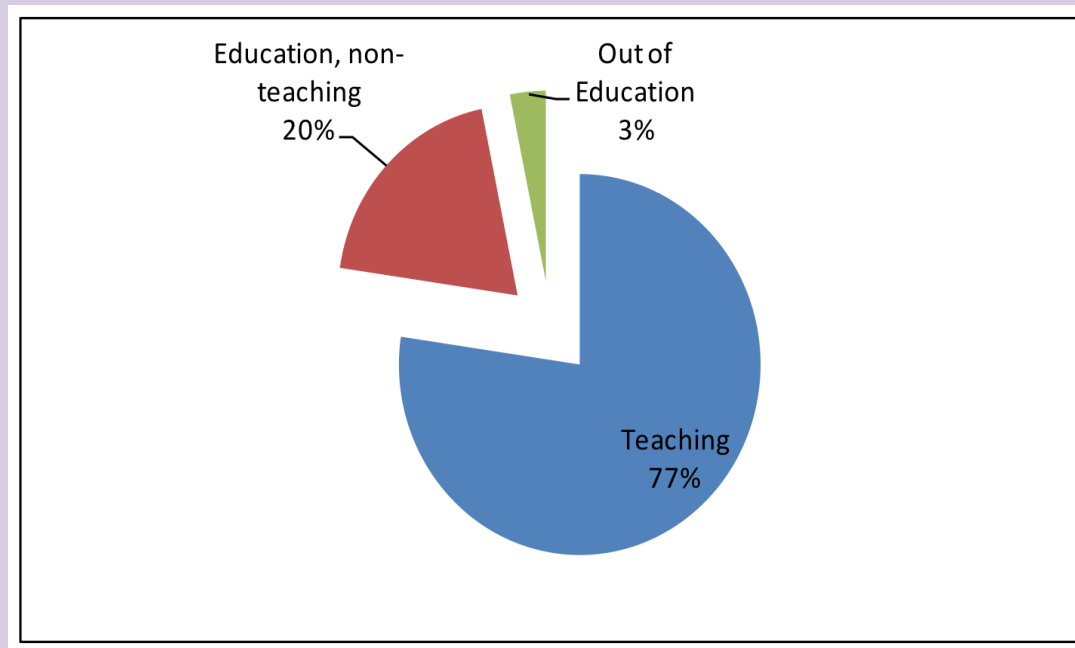


Source: Survey of summer institute participants 2010

NWP leadership and knowledge contribute *cumulatively* to improvement over time

97% of institute participants stay in classrooms and the profession for over 17 years

77% stay in the classroom and 20% play other roles in education



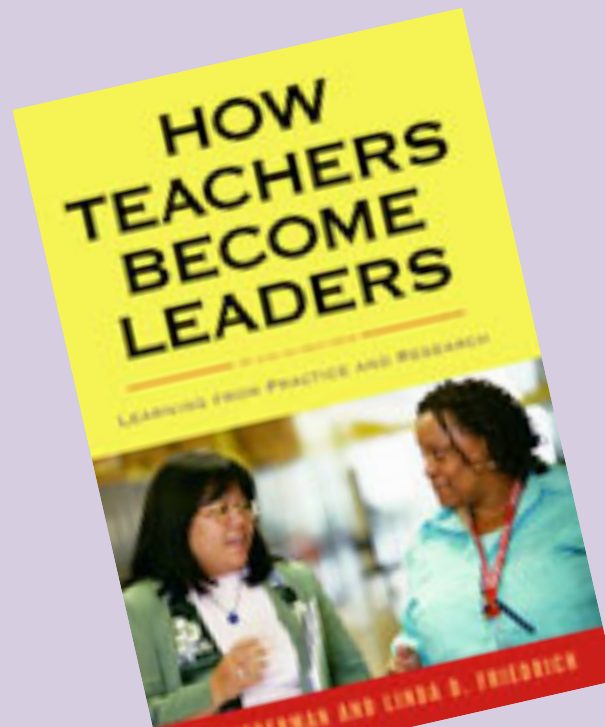
Source: National Writing Project Legacy Study, March 2011, n=5,512

The NWP infrastructure supports a national “**Networked Improvement Community**” of leaders in the teaching of writing

In Doug Engelbart's terms, *an improvement community is any group involved in a collective pursuit to improve a given capability*. Examples include a professional association, community of practice or consortium, a corporate initiative to innovate management practices, a local task force to improve our schools, or a medical research community seeking to cure a specific disease. *An improvement community that puts special attention on how it can be dramatically more effective at solving important problems, boosting its collective IQ by employing better and better tools and practices in innovative ways, is a networked improvement community (NIC).*

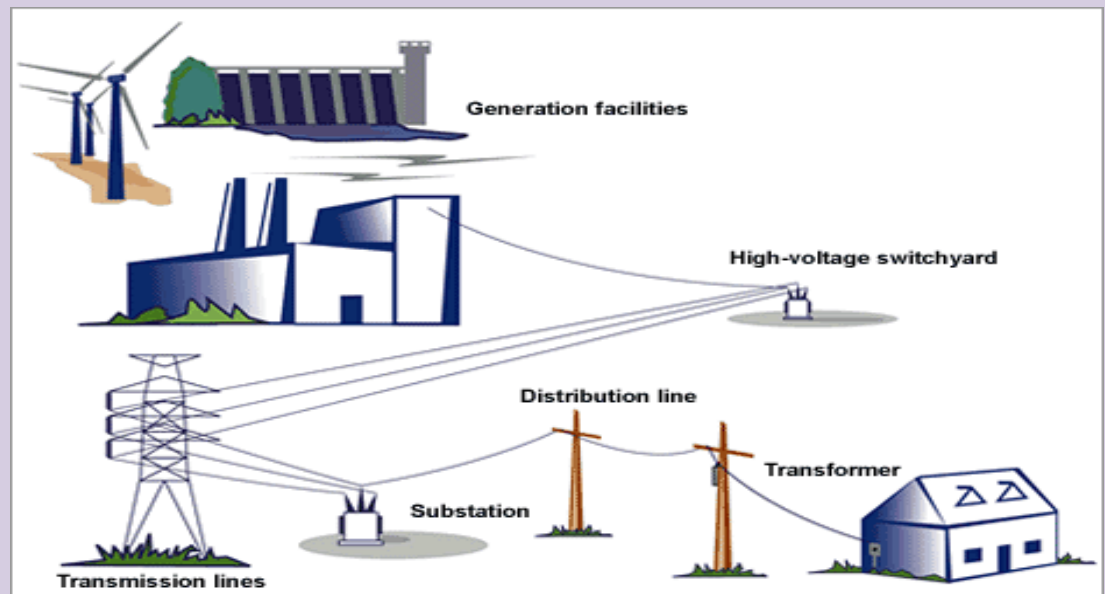
Engelbart is inventor of the computer mouse and winner of the National Medal of Technology. Bootstrap alliance: www.dougenelbart.org

Every local site builds teacher leadership



The power of a connected infrastructure is that it empowers daily work at the local level

- Everyday examples—electrical grid, air traffic systems, roads and highways
- Strong central capacity supports customized local services
- Broad and equitable access

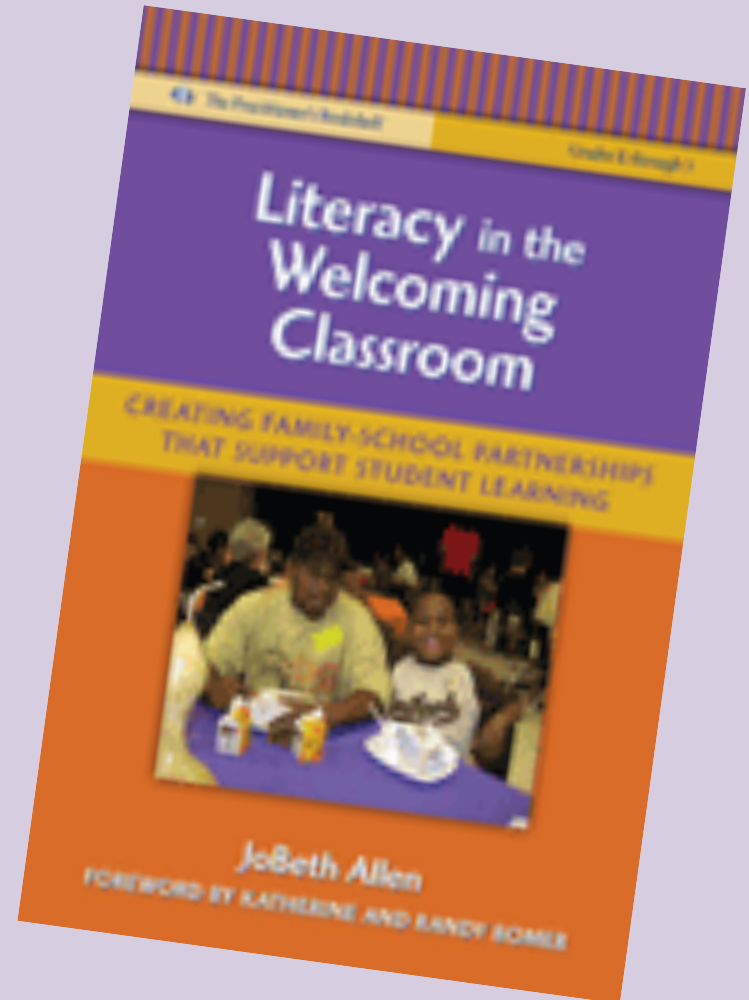
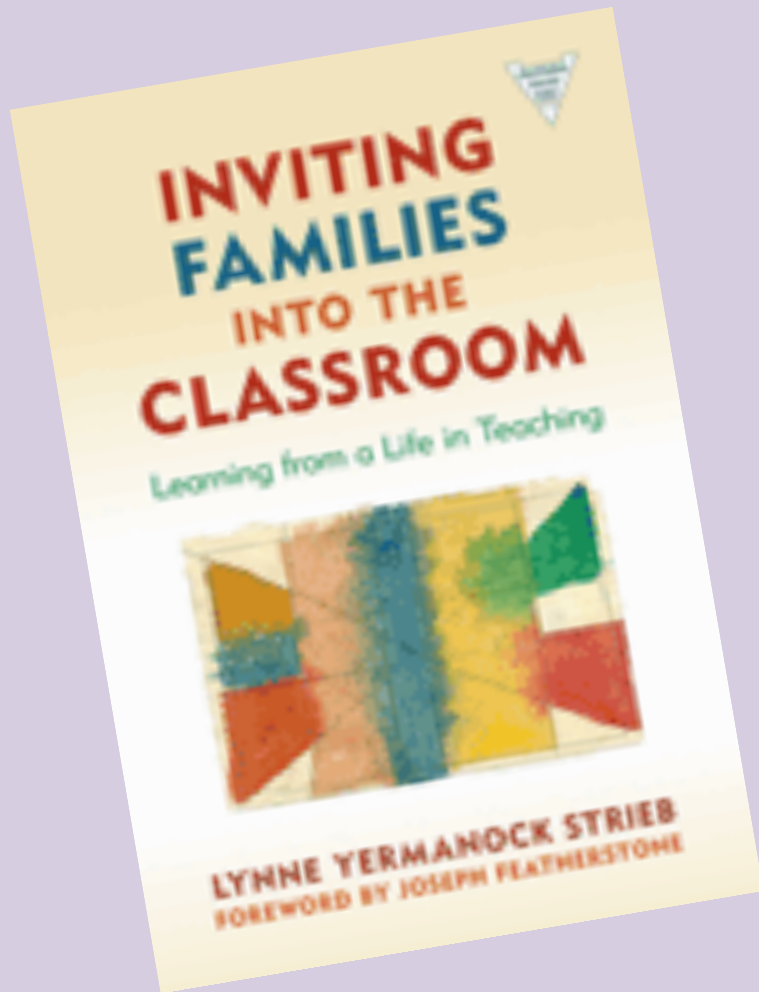


NWP sites address local needs and adapt to local contexts

Annually, the 200+ NWP sites—

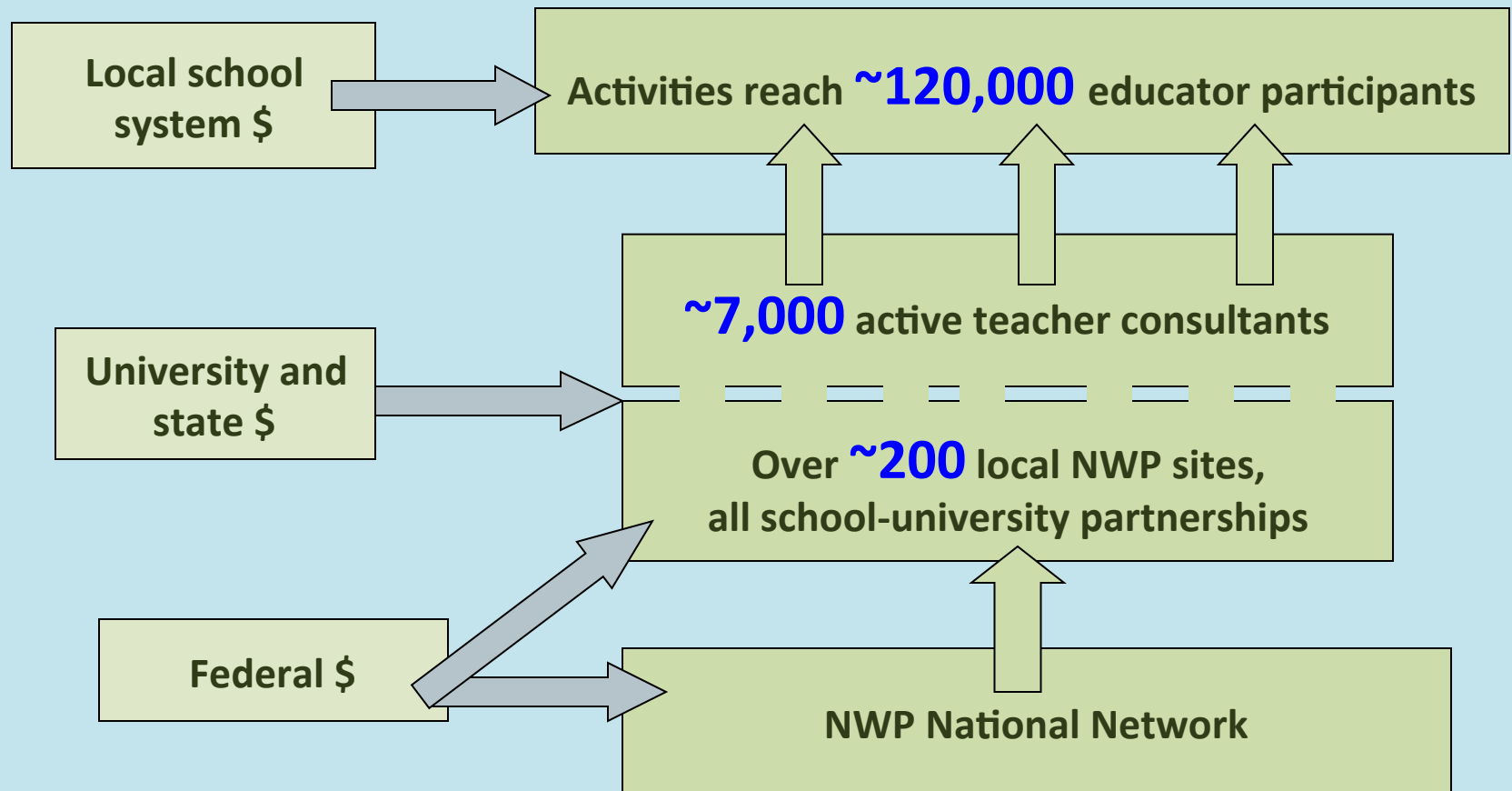
- Provide professional development for teachers in **over 3,000 local districts**
- Offer **over 1,000 writers' camps** for local youth, family and community

The NWP distributes practical knowledge for local communities



FEDERAL SUPPORT IS VITALLY
IMPORTANT TO THE NWP'S
ABILITY TO CONTINUE
IMPROVING WRITING

Federal support is what enables the NWP to work at a national scale to deliver programs locally



In sum...this is how the NWP is best understood

NWP is already the kind of effective, cost-efficient, innovative, large-scale infrastructure that the nation needs for the improvement of writing.

Federal support enables the NWP to generate the leadership and provide the local services that help teachers improve teaching and learning of writing.

END

Writing is essential to health and success of the nation

“The consequences of poor reading and writing skills not only threaten the well-being of individual Americans, but the country as a whole. Globalization and technological advances have changed the nature of the workplace. Reading and writing are now essential skills in most white- and blue-collar jobs. Ensuring that adolescents become skilled readers and writers is not merely an option for America, it is an absolute necessity.”

Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010. *Writing to Read: Evidence for how Writing Can Improve Reading*

Writing is a gatekeeper to economic success

“Unless the nation makes a consistent investment toward delivering comprehensive reading and writing instruction throughout the pre-K–12 grade span, a large proportion of low-income students and students of color will remain sidelined from full participation in the modern workplace.”

Alliance for Excellent Education, Policy Brief, September, 2010.
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