

10th National TAP Conference:
Leading Innovation through Teacher Effectiveness

March 19-21, 2010
Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C.

Friday, March 19, 2010

11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

6:30 p.m.

TAP in the New Decade and Welcome Dinner

As we embark upon this new decade, we reflect on the continued growth of TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement. TAP's sustained and meaningful improvements in teacher quality and student achievement now impact more than 7,500 teachers and 85,000 students in diverse schools across the nation. TAP Founder and education visionary Lowell Milken will analyze and articulate why TAP is the answer to strengthening the educational experience for *all* students. As he highlights the past year's accomplishments, Mr. Milken will be joined by several voices from the field to describe TAP's unique structure integrating professional support, comprehensive data system development, and partnerships that have emerged and prospered.

Welcome

Gary Stark, Chief Operating Officer, NIET

Keynote Presenter

Lowell Milken, Founder, TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement

Presenters

Jason Culbertson, Director of School Services, NIET

Tammy Kreuz, Executive Director, Texas TAP

Sheila Talamo, Executive Director, Louisiana TAP

Andrea Thomas-Reynolds, Chief Executive Officer, Algiers Charter Schools Association, Louisiana

Saturday, March 20, 2010

7:15 a.m. – 6:15 p.m.

Conference Registration

7:15 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Breakfast

Speaker

Yvonne Chan, Principal, Vaughn Next Century Learning Center; Member, California State Board of Education

8:35 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.

TAP Concurrent Sessions, Block A

Sessions will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please select another session if the room is at capacity.

TAP from the Career Teacher's Perspective

TAP provides career teachers with growth opportunities and support for improvement that are not found in most schools. This panel will highlight the experience of the TAP career teacher and provide a first-hand look at how TAP has helped to develop and support all teachers.

Successful TAP Instructional Strategies (1)

This showcase of student strategies provides attendees with an array of successful approaches to improve instruction. Facilitators will share a variety of information about specific strategies including the identified student need, subject and skill that the strategy targets, segmentation and sequence of the strategy, field-test data, tracking data, scoring rubrics and critical attributes. This session will provide a preview of the range of strategies in the NIET Strategies Database.

Communicating TAP to Parents, the Community and the Media

In this session we will hear from TAP leaders about their successful strategies for communicating TAP's comprehensive, multifaceted system in clear and concise terms to community members, funders, parents and the media. We will discuss internal communications to TAP teachers as well as effective communications to external audiences.

Effective TAP Implementation: The Principal's Perspective

Research clearly shows that the principal's knowledge, support and commitment to any initiative or school reform model are vital to the fidelity and success of implementation. Participants will hear from four practicing TAP principals who will share their successes and challenges.

Understanding the Instructional Indicators: Thinking and Problem Solving

The last two indicators of the TAP Instructional Rubric can often be the most complex. This session will focus on understanding how "thinking" is taught, offer a more complete understanding of the Thinking indicator and explore the connection between Thinking and Problem Solving.

The Shared Leadership Model of TAP

TAP's shared leadership model empowers teachers and administrators to take ownership of the comprehensive school reform. TAP provides the unique opportunity for master and mentor teachers to partner in school leadership responsibilities with the principal. Principals continue to be the primary driving force behind school change; however, they do so with the explicit support and partnership of the other TAP leadership team members. TAP principals and master teachers will discuss the changes in their leadership roles as a result of TAP and how these changes have strengthened their schools.

A Discussion of TAP Teacher Incentives

In a traditional school, teachers do not have the opportunity to be rewarded for their positive impact on student academic growth, nor are they rewarded for their own instructional expertise. In TAP schools, teacher compensation is structured so that instructional effectiveness and expertise are recognized and rewarded. Panelists will reflect on the impact of TAP incentives, as well as how to ensure that the process is fair and understandable for the entire school team.

The "Refinement" Area of Post-Conference

The TAP post-conference is essential to increasing teachers' understanding of the instructional rubric. The heart of the post-conference is the refinement area, which provides teachers an opportunity to receive quality coaching in order to effectively improve instruction. This session examines the use of reflective elements as a method to structure the refinement area of the post-conference.

The Learning Environment

This session will delve deeper into the indicators and descriptors of the TAP Learning Environment Rubric and explore how to maximize its effectiveness as a powerful evaluation tool.

Field-Testing: Where Do I Start?

One of the most daunting areas of responsibility for a master teacher tends to be field-testing. The process for field-testing is cyclical and can be further complicated by the variety of assessments necessary to measure the effectiveness of a strategy. Though there is not one prescribed way to conduct field-testing, this session will cover the process, pre/post tests and state assessments. Attendees will also be able to see videos of field-testing and, in this interactive setting, identify critical attributes.

Engaging Reticent Teachers

When beginning a school reform effort, change is necessary but difficult. Some teachers may not actively engage in this process. These panelists will discuss various techniques and strategies they have used to create an infectious positive school culture and engage those who may need additional support.

Implementing TAP with Other District or State Initiatives

Schools implementing the TAP system often operate other state or district initiatives simultaneously. This panel of innovative principals will discuss how TAP complements and enhances other initiatives without duplicating efforts.

Special Area Teachers in TAP Schools

As an integral part of TAP, specialists and special area teachers are involved in each element of the system. In TAP schools, specialists must have strong content and instructional knowledge. Panelists will discuss their experiences as special area teachers or leaders of specialist clusters in TAP schools.

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Leadership and Innovation in Education Systems Reform

The research is clear. Teacher quality is the most important school-related factor driving improvements in student achievement. Though this fact has gained widespread acceptance in the education community, few states, districts or schools have adopted systems to attract, retain, motivate and develop the most effective teachers. How are federal, state and local leaders working together to develop innovative policies that will improve teacher and principal quality in our schools? What can policy leaders do to ensure that such effective systems are implemented to improve educator effectiveness and student achievement growth?

Moderator

Lowell Milken, Founder, TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement

Panelists

Jeb Bush, Former Governor of Florida; Founder, Chairman of the Board and President, Foundation for Excellence in Education

Paul Pastorek, State Superintendent of Education, Louisiana

Roberto J. Rodríguez, Special Assistant to President Obama for Education, White House Domestic Policy Council

James H. Shelton III, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education

12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

TAP Recognition Awards and Luncheon

1:30 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.

TAP Concurrent Sessions, Block B

Sessions will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please select another session if the room is at capacity.

Triumphs and Challenges of TAP Implementation during the First Year

Requiring teachers and administrators to deviate from the status quo and change the school culture can be very challenging. TAP administrators and teachers will reflect on their first year of TAP implementation, share strategies used to overcome obstacles, and describe how the basic elements of TAP are incorporated into the school's day-to-day operation.

Successful TAP Instructional Strategies (2)

This showcase of student strategies provides attendees with an array of successful approaches to improve instruction. Facilitators will share a variety of information about specific strategies including the identified student need, subject and skill that the strategy targets, segmentation and sequence of the strategy, field-test data, tracking data, scoring rubrics and critical attributes. This session will provide a preview of the range of strategies in the NIET Strategies Database.

Leading Change: District and State Perspective

Implementing a comprehensive school reform system such as TAP cannot happen successfully without the support and partnership of stakeholders at the local and state levels who share the common goal of improving teacher quality to increase student achievement. District and state education administrators are most often leading TAP implementation at the school site. In this session, these leaders will discuss policies and partnerships they have developed with school boards, teachers unions, community leaders and others to ensure TAP's successful implementation.

The Role of the Principal in Planning and Leading Effective Leadership Team Meetings

Knowing that the TAP Leadership Team is the vehicle that drives the level of TAP implementation on each campus, it is important that leadership team meetings are focused and effective. This session will guide administrators in planning and leading effective leadership team meetings and in building leadership capacity among their leadership team members.

Understanding the Instructional Indicators: Thinking and Problem Solving

The last two indicators of the TAP Instructional Rubric can often be the most complex. This session will focus on understanding how “thinking” is taught, offer a more complete understanding of the Thinking indicator and explore the connection between Thinking and Problem Solving.

The Role of the TAP Master Teacher

Providing growth opportunities through the career path is an essential element of the TAP system. Career and mentor teachers have the opportunity for continued career advancement as a master teacher. Experienced TAP master teachers will discuss their roles and provide a clear understanding of how the TAP Leadership Team positions work together to improve and support excellent instructional practices in their schools.

Professional Development with Relevance

TAP's ongoing applied professional development relies on student assessment data to guide professional growth activities of TAP teachers. These data may be drawn from measures developed by the state, district or school. This process reflects a new way for most teachers to receive professional support. TAP school practitioners will discuss successful strategies they have learned through this data-driven approach.

The “Reinforcement” Area of Post-Conference

This session focuses on the importance of reinforcing teachers’ instructional skills in order to not only boost morale, but also help them become consciously competent and transfer these strengths into other areas of their teaching.

Using the TAP Rubric with Special Education Students

In this session, TAP master teachers will speak about accommodating the TAP Instructional Rubric to a special education environment. Participants will view and analyze a special education lesson, as well as gain useful insights from the panelists.

Maximizing Development Time

Quality development time is essential for teachers to successfully transfer their cluster learning to the classroom. This critical phase of cluster is often shortened or underdeveloped. This session will focus on the development portion of the cluster protocol and offer ideas and examples of ways to make this time meaningful.

Engaging Reticent Teachers

When beginning a school reform effort, change is necessary but difficult. Some teachers may not actively engage in this process. These panelists will discuss various techniques and strategies they have used to create an infectious positive school culture and engage those who may need additional support.

TAP Educators as Leaders in the National Reform Landscape

President Barack Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan have made effective teachers and school leaders a centerpiece of the national education agenda, and have cited TAP as a leading model for these reforms. As a result, TAP teachers and administrators implementing this innovative reform in schools and districts are well-placed to serve as experts on the subject. This panel of TAP practitioners will discuss how they have shared their experiences of TAP and explained TAP's lessons for national education reform with education leaders and policymakers.

Collaborative Planning for Field-Testing and Cluster

We know that quality field-testing is important for effective clusters. Collaborating on field-testing efforts only serves to heighten the quality and validity of strategies brought to clusters. This panel will discuss the systems in place in TAP schools that allow for master and mentor teachers to collaborate on planning and conducting field-testing toward the goal of effective cluster implementation.

3:10 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.

A New Federal Approach to Improving Teacher Practices: Title II Revisited

Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is high on the national education agenda in the coming months. A key area of focus is Title II, which provides funding to states and districts for teacher and principal professional development activities. Significant changes in these professional development funding streams provide a unique opportunity for TAP and other reforms focused on significant changes in the ways teachers are supported, evaluated and compensated. How can limited federal funding be redirected to support innovation in the management of human capital in schools? How can these funding streams be linked to measurable changes in teacher and principal effectiveness and student achievement growth?

Moderator

Andrew J. Rotherham, Co-Founder and Partner, Bellwether Education

Panelists

Jerel Booker, Associate Commissioner, Educator and Student Policy Initiatives, Texas Education Agency

James P. McIntyre Jr., Superintendent, Knox County Schools, Tennessee

Alice Seagren, Commissioner of Education, Minnesota

Judy Wurtzel, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education

4:55 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

TAP Concurrent Sessions, Block C

Sessions will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please select another session if the room is at capacity.

Effectively Using Value-Added Data in the Classroom

TAP uses value-added analysis at the district, school and classroom level to identify schools, grades and content areas that have or have not increased student achievement, to address teachers' strengths and areas of improvement and to analyze the growth of students by subgroup. Both teachers and administrators will discuss effective uses of value-added data to improve instructional practices and leverage teacher effectiveness.

TAP over the Long Haul: Implementing TAP Beyond Three Years

Successful school reform is measured not only by improved student outcomes, but also by a shift in school culture. These changes often take several years. But what happens to the dynamic of reform once your school has been implementing TAP for three years or more? This session will focus on taking TAP to the next level at your school. Learning from the experiences of teachers and administrators, attendees will come away ready to refine TAP's elements to ensure that all students achieve their goals.

The Services That Support the TAP System

TAP schools have partnered with various vendors to provide essential services that support successful TAP implementation. Some of these vendors will discuss how they have been able to assist TAP schools, develop partnerships and help to ensure TAP's positive impact on teacher quality and student achievement growth.

Using CODE to Monitor Inter-Rater Reliability

The CODE system provides valuable teacher evaluation data to TAP leadership teams. CODE data analysis is necessary to move schools forward in enhancing their professional learning communities. This session will focus on the use of CODE data in leadership team meetings to help build inter-rater reliability, monitor for score inflation, effectively plan clusters and make sound instructional decisions.

Understanding the Instructional Indicators: Motivating Students and Academic Feedback

Two indicators from the TAP Instructional Rubric, Motivating Students and Academic Feedback, have some similarities. However, the proficient teacher motivates students as a basis for providing quality academic feedback. This session will explore the similarities and differences between these two indicators and give examples of how they would look and sound like in the classroom.

Principal Accountability and Compensation in TAP Schools

Principal leadership is essential to successful TAP implementation. Though not an explicit mandate of TAP, most TAP schools have implemented a principal compensation structure based on multiple measures, including school-wide student achievement growth. Panelists will share what strong principal leadership looks like in a TAP school, and how that leadership is being measured effectively. TAP leaders will discuss the various methods used to compensate principals for successful leadership and the implications these systems have on improved student achievement.

Coaching the Coach

After every observation we provide teachers with quality feedback in order to refine their instructional skills. Coaches also need that same level of feedback in order to continuously improve. Participants in this session will examine the definition and use of coaches in TAP schools, identify and develop basic coaching tools, and review coaching perspectives.

What is Teacher Support?

Teacher support can have a powerful impact on a TAP school's success. This panel will examine methods of providing teacher support and the perspectives of various stakeholders on what makes teacher support effective.

Modeling in Cluster

The manner in which a master teacher models the strategy during cluster is an integral component for cluster learning. The process for stepping in and out of a strategy demonstration and giving members the experience of a strategy from the student perspective is vital to a teacher's understanding of how to implement a strategy effectively. In this session participants will gain an understanding of how modeling during cluster can powerfully impact a cluster members' learning.

Cluster Planning

Master teachers have many variables to consider when planning clusters, including researching and presenting strategies, incorporating specials teachers and determining which students to field-test, among others. This panel will give master teachers the opportunity to share how they set up their field tests, make modifications to strategies, the planning and forethought for modeling in clusters, how they include specials/electives teachers, and general cluster planning.

Teacher Incentive Fund Opportunities in 2010

The Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) provides federal funding for schools and districts that find innovative ways to attract and retain more effective teachers in high-need schools. Panelists will discuss the new opportunities

provided by expanded TIF funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and 2010 federal education budget, as well as how TAP aligns with TIF requirements.

Free Evening

Sunday, March 21, 2010

7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Measuring Teacher Effectiveness: Evaluation Systems That Are “Aligned by Design”

The most important factor for schools in improving student achievement is a teacher’s effectiveness. Despite this commonly held fact, teacher quality is rarely measured or monitored, nor is teacher effectiveness data used to inform decision makers in a meaningful manner. Until recently when the Obama administration has brought attention to the need for teacher evaluation reform, measuring teacher effectiveness had been largely neglected. With the increased attention now drawn to teacher evaluations, this panel will discuss the necessary elements to a useful teacher evaluation system. How should teacher evaluation align to other systems within the school? How will improving teacher evaluation systems lead to improved student learning?

Moderator

Thomas Toch, Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington

Panelists

Craig D. Jerald, President, Break the Curve Consulting

Rhonda Johnson, President, Columbus Education Association, Ohio

Brad Jupp, Senior Program Advisor, Office of the Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education

William L. Sanders, Senior Manager of Value-Added Assessment and Research, SAS Institute Inc.

10:50 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

TAP Concurrent Sessions, Block D

Sessions will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please select another session if the room is at capacity.

TAP in the Secondary Schools

TAP’s four elements provide the opportunity for systemic reform in secondary schools. High schools and middle schools have integrated TAP into their structures, leading to improvements in teacher quality and growth in student achievement. High school and middle school leaders, as well as practitioners, will discuss successful practices in TAP secondary schools, ongoing development issues and challenges they have overcome.

Administrator’s Guide to Effective Cluster Meetings

Because weekly cluster meetings provide critical professional development for teachers to improve student achievement, it is important that principals are able to monitor cluster meetings as well as provide appropriate feedback and support to cluster leaders. This session will help administrators know what effective cluster meetings should look like and build their skills in providing appropriate feedback to cluster leaders.

Transforming a School: Success Stories from the Field

In this session, TAP teachers and principals will share stories of transforming their schools with the TAP system in place. TAP practitioners will describe the dramatic changes they have made, the challenges they have faced as leaders in the process, and the solutions they have discovered to create meaningful educational improvements.

Recruiting and Hiring the Most Effective Instructional Leaders

The success of TAP is dependent upon hiring the most effective master and mentor teachers to lead the reform. This session will provide guidance and strategies TAP schools have used to hire the most capable and appropriate teachers for these TAP leadership positions.

Leading Primary Clusters

Master and mentor teachers find primary-grade-level clusters among the most challenging to plan. Due to various state accountability requirements, these grade levels often lack the formalized assessments that higher grade levels have in place necessary to effectively make data-driven decisions. This session will discuss how to structure clusters to be developmentally appropriate for primary grades. Key components will be the planning and innovation necessary to develop and modify assessments for primary grades; distinguishing between activities and strategies; and conducting and tracking skill cycles in impactful ways.

The Learning Environment

This session will delve deeper into the indicators and descriptors of the TAP Learning Environment Rubric and explore how to maximize its effectiveness as a powerful evaluation tool.

Utilizing Student Work in Cluster

The examination of student work in cluster is integral in determining the effectiveness of strategies. This session will explore the process for utilizing student work in cluster in a purposeful way and how this process can aid the data-driven decision making crucial to increasing student achievement.

Reallocating Existing State and Federal Funds to Support TAP

Establishing ongoing funding for TAP is a goal of successful TAP implementation. Although developing new streams of funding is beneficial, it is often the reallocation of existing funds that provides long-term stability for TAP. Panelists will discuss how they have used existing sources of funds to sustain TAP in their schools and districts.

TAP's Instructionally Focused Accountability System

TAP's instructionally focused accountability system holds teachers accountable for their instructional practices and the achievement of their students, while providing a support structure to identify areas of improvement and reinforce areas of strength. Panelists from TAP schools will discuss how the TAP evaluation system and increased accountability have led to improved instruction and learning.

Collaborative Planning for Field-Testing and Cluster

We know that quality field-testing is important for effective clusters. Collaborating on field-testing efforts only serves to heighten the quality and validity of strategies brought to clusters. This panel will discuss the systems in place in TAP schools that allow for master and mentor teachers to collaborate on planning and conducting field-testing toward the goal of effective cluster implementation.

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Farewell Luncheon