

**THE CASE FOR
THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT
AN EVALUATOR'S PERSPECTIVE**

Inverness Research Associates

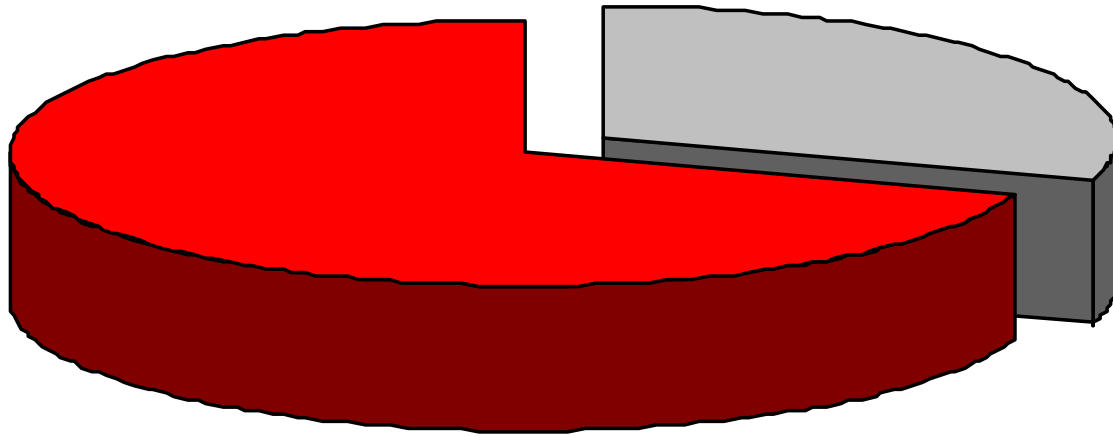
<http://www.inverness-research.org>

April 2005

Talking point #1

There are teachers across the nation who do not have access to high quality professional development.

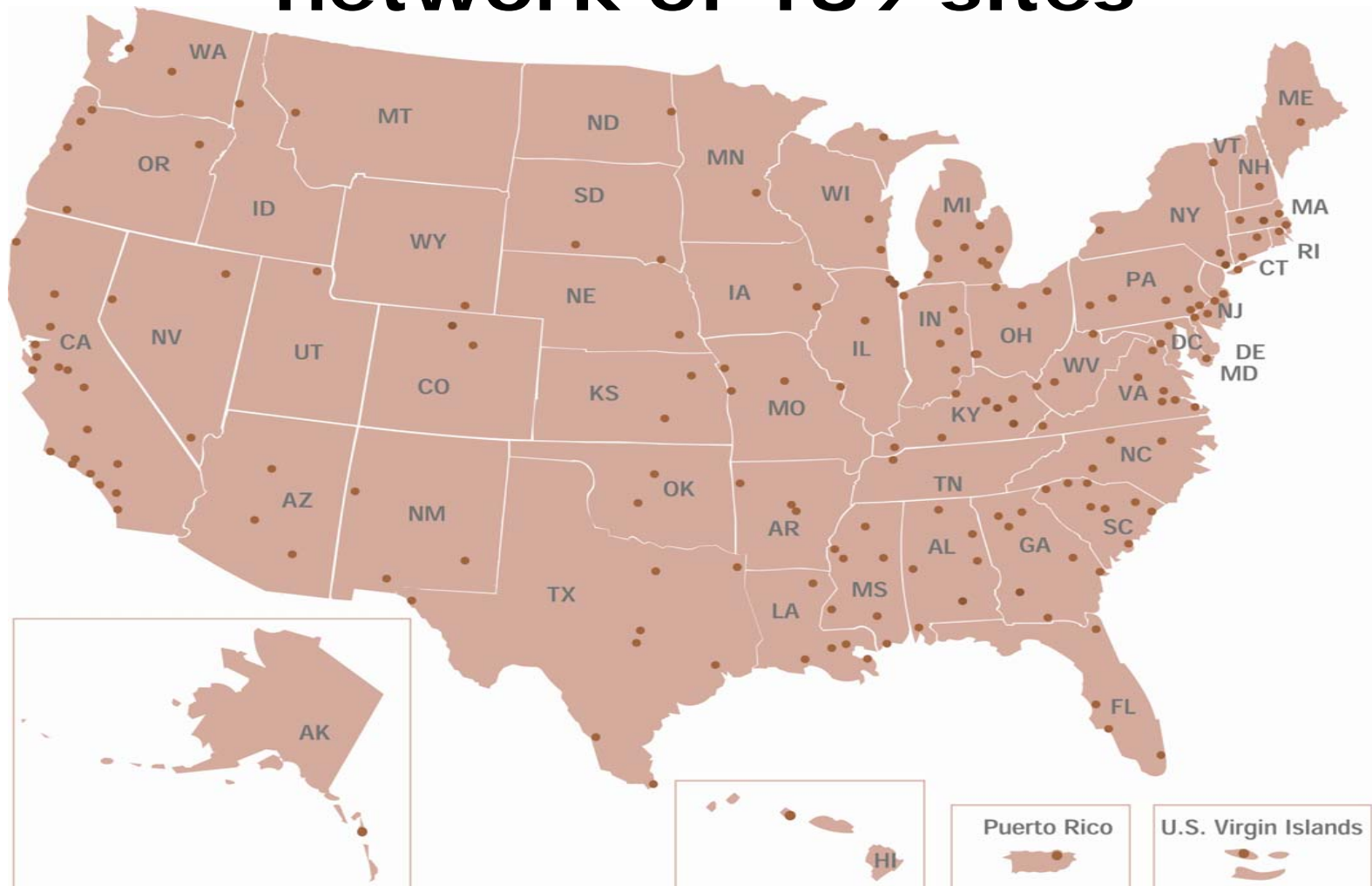
**Currently 7 in 10 teachers are
within the service area of a local
Writing Project site**



3.4 million U.S. teachers

*(Sources: National Center for Education Statistics,
annual site survey for 2002-03)*

The NWP is beginning to have national coverage through its network of 189 sites



Key ideas

It is a goal of the NWP to have an NWP site within the geographical reach of every teacher in the United States.

The NWP Network is positioned to grow itself. With more sites—and more capacity within existing sites—the NWP can reach and serve a greater proportion of teachers in the nation.

Talking point #2

There is a national need to improve student writing

AND

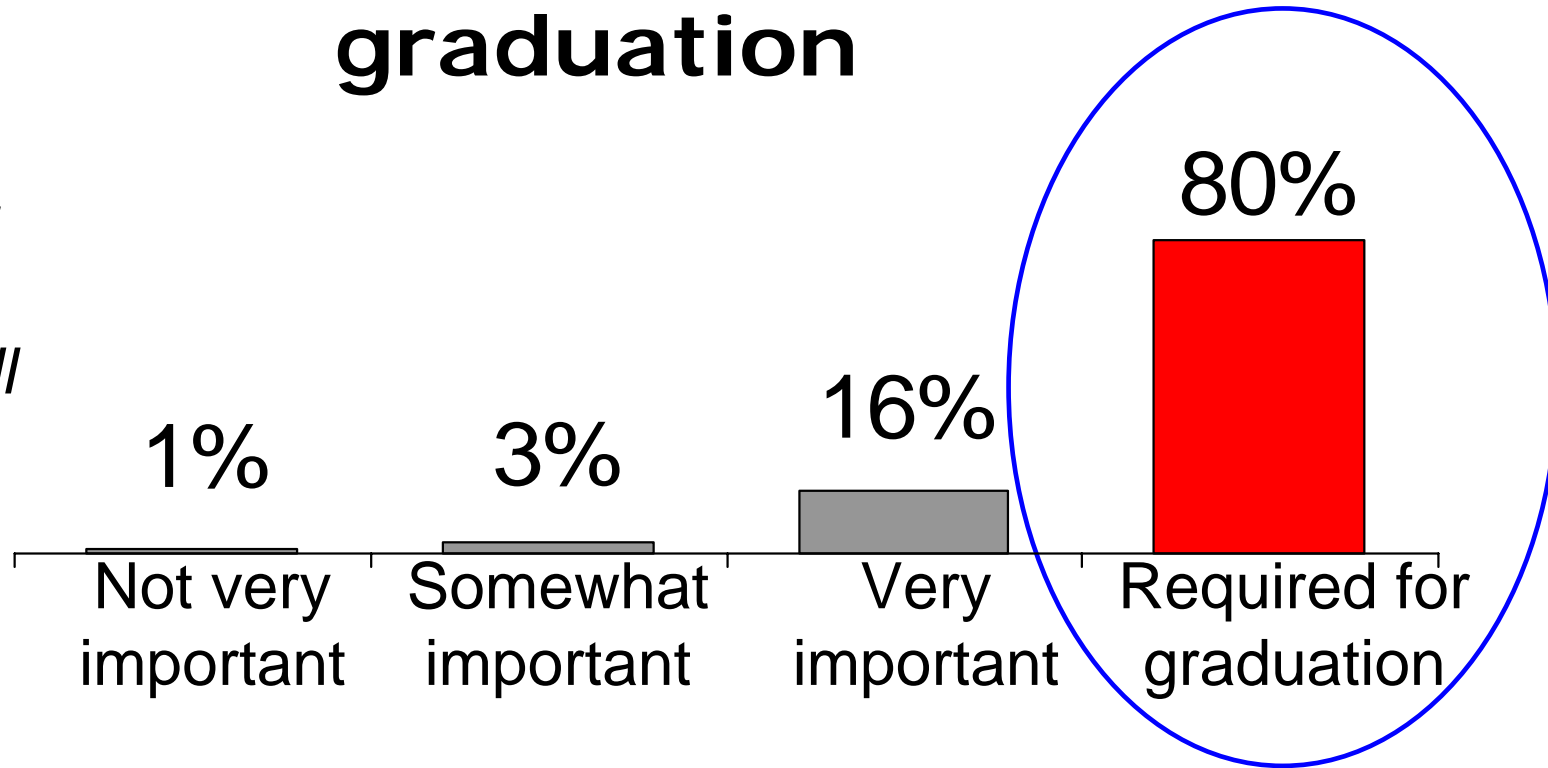
a national need for quality professional development in writing.

1) Writing is important

- **The Public**
- **Business**
- **Higher
Education**

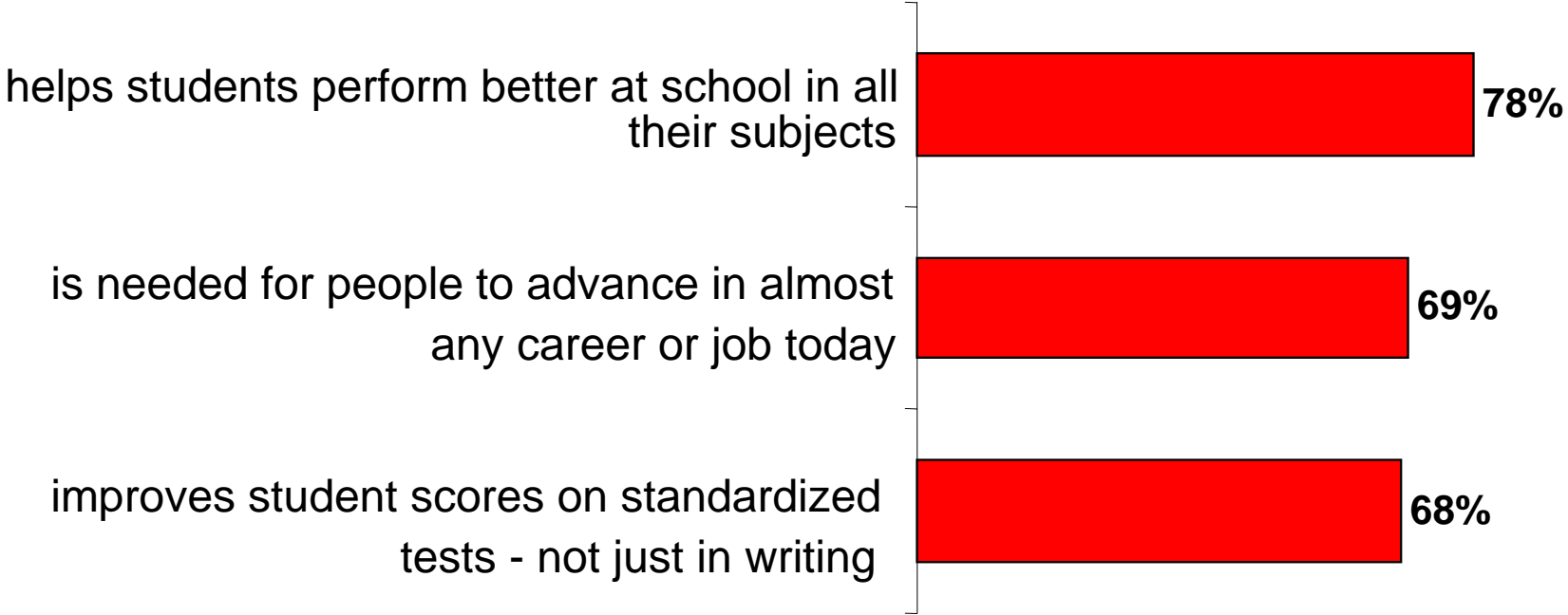
80% of Americans believe that knowing how to write well should be required for high school graduation

Knowing how to write well should be...



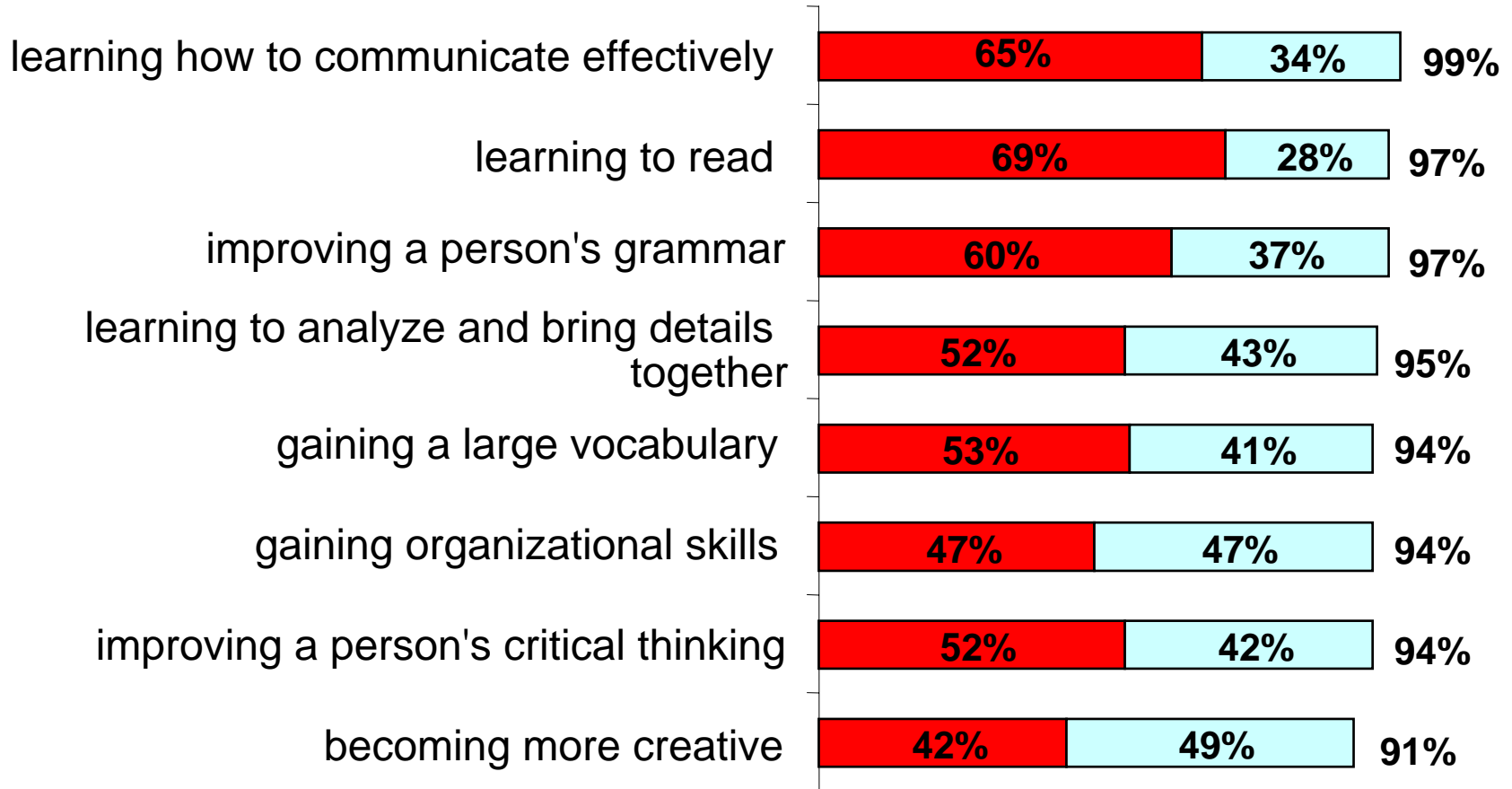
Belden, Russonello & Stewart

Over two-thirds of Americans strongly agree that learning to write well...



Belden, Russonello & Stewart

There is high consensus among survey respondents: Learning to write well is essential or important for . . .



Belden, Russonello & Stewart

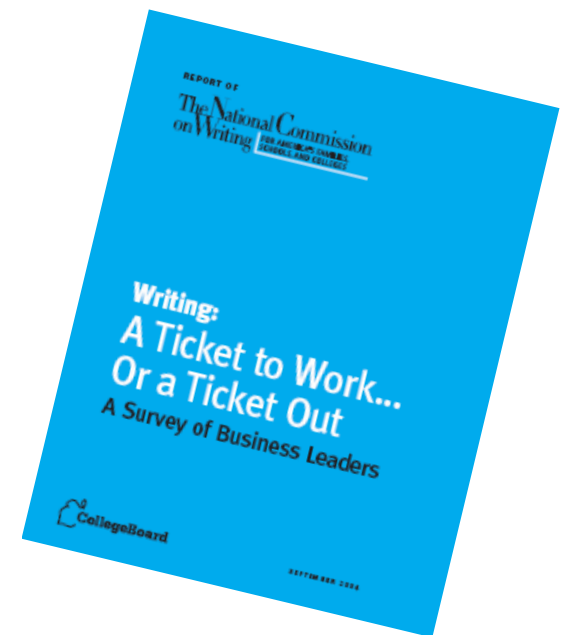
■ Essential □ Important

“. . . in today’s workplace writing is a ‘threshold skill’ for hiring and promotion

Writing is a ticket to professional opportunity

Employers spend billions annually correcting writing deficiencies”

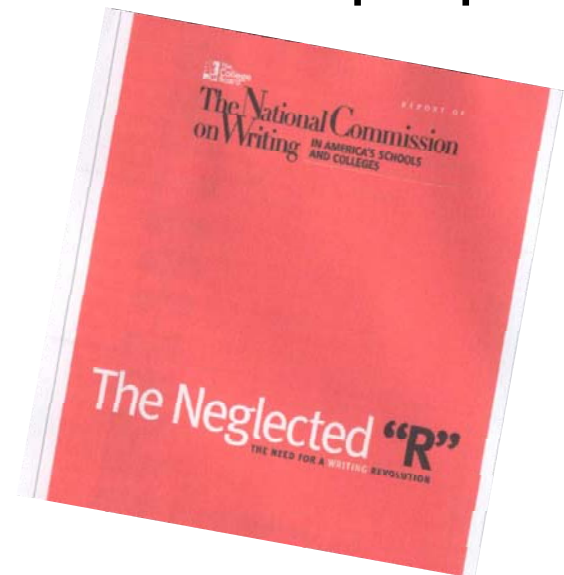
*Writing: A Ticket to Work...or a Ticket Out –
A Survey of Business Leaders
Conducted by College Board*



“Writing, properly understood, is thought on paper...The reward of disciplined writing is a mind equipped to think.

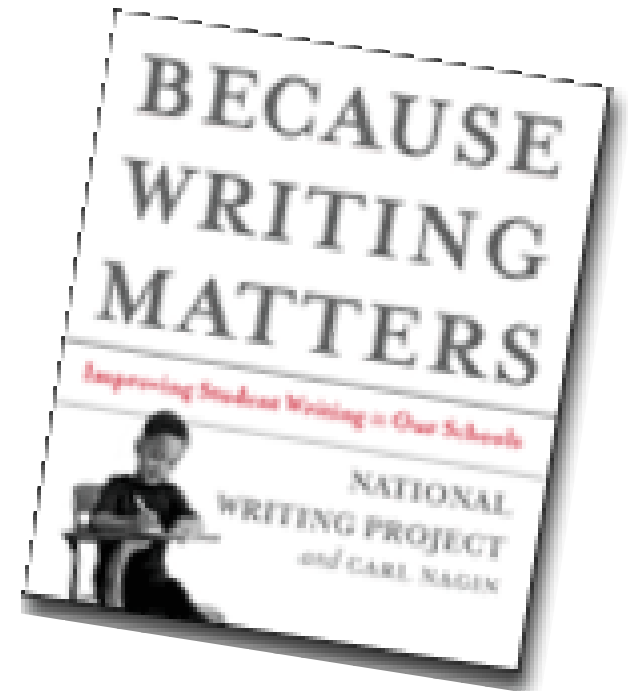
“Writing education will never realize its potential as an engine of opportunity and economic growth until a writing revolution puts the power of language and communication in their proper place in the classroom.”

- *The National Commission on Writing
In America's Schools and Colleges*



“Effective writing skills are important in all stages of life from early education to future employment.”

- *National Center for Education Statistics*
(U.S. Department of Education),
The Condition of Education, p. 70



New SAT and ACT exams underscore the importance of writing

SAT

25 minute short essay

- measures ability to:
 - Organize and express ideas clearly
 - Develop and support the main idea
 - Use appropriate word choice and sentence structure
- Students
 - develop a point of a view on an issue, using reasoning and evidence — based on their experiences, readings, or observations — to support their ideas.

ACT

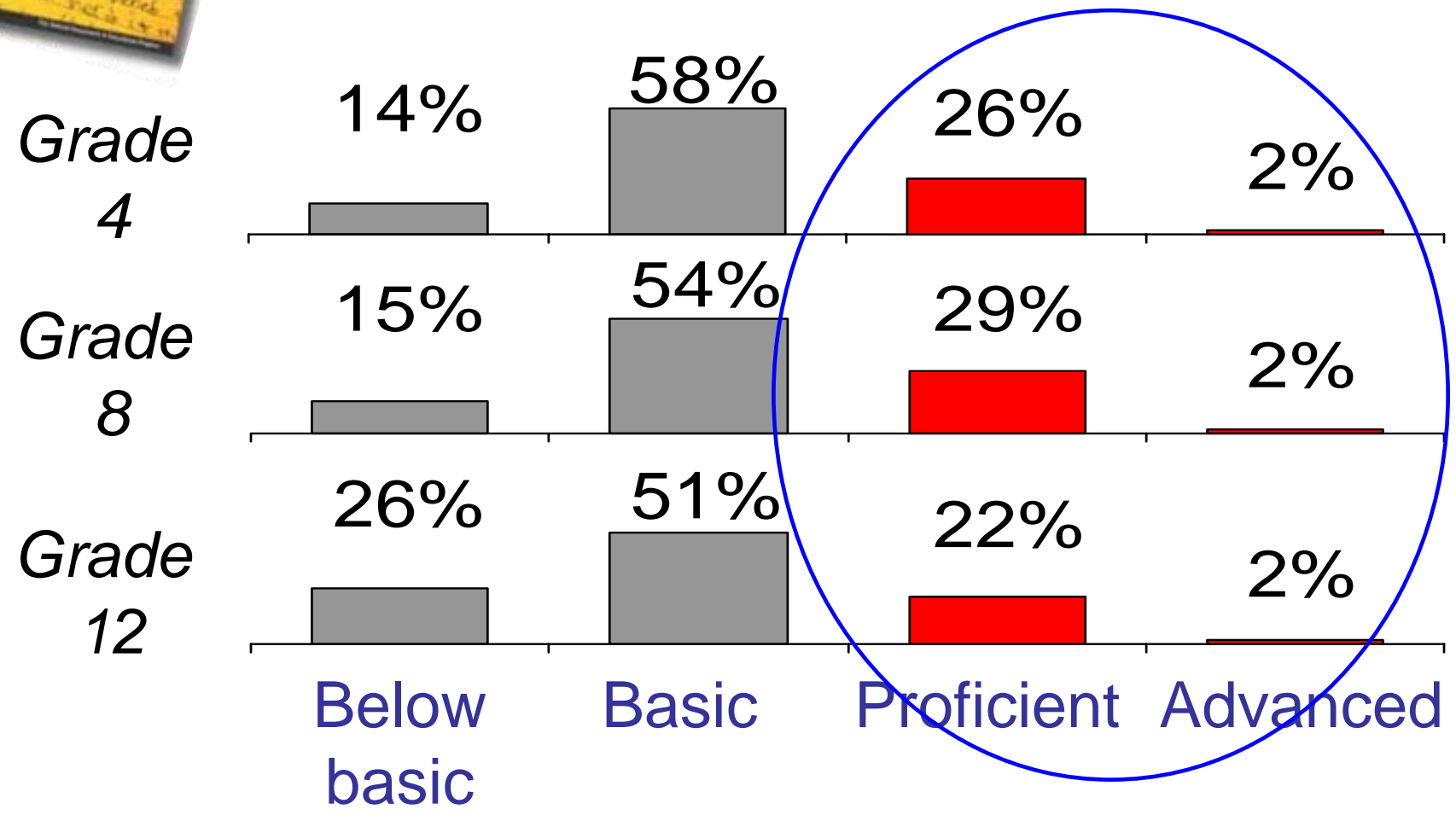
30 minute essay

- measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.
- The test consists of one writing prompt that defines an issue and describe two points of view on that issue. Students respond to a question about their position on the issue described in the writing prompt.

**2) Students need to
do better**



NAEP writing scores show that too few students are proficient

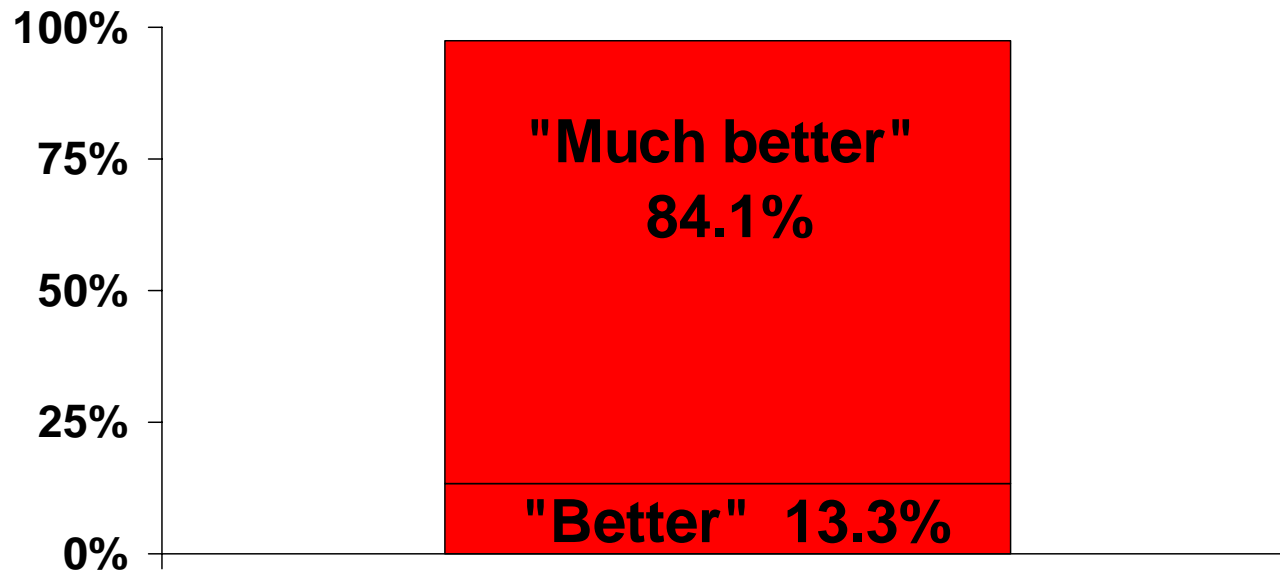


3) There is a need for better instruction for students...

and therefore...

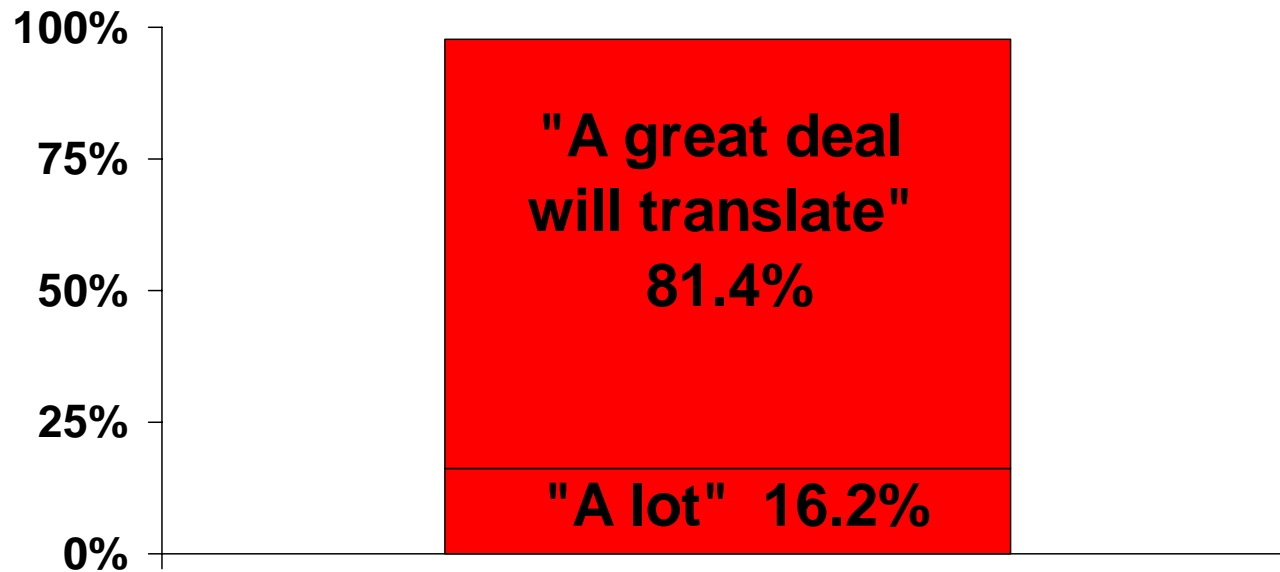
**a need for better professional development
for their teachers**

97% of teachers at NWP institutes say NWP is better than other professional development



(Source: Survey of summer institute participants 2004)

98% of teachers at NWP institutes say that what they learn translates into improved writing skills for their students



AED study: NWP improves classroom teaching and student writing

- Student writing in NWP classrooms exhibits “high levels of construction of knowledge, organization and coherence, and control of the conventions of English”
- NWP teachers infuse writing throughout the curriculum and across subject areas
- NWP teachers spend far more time on writing instruction than most other teachers nationwide.



Inverness Research Associates: A Study for U.S. Department of Education

**The NWP promotes teaching practices that
promote student achievement**

“On the whole, the results indicate that NWP
institutes practices that
contribute to higher achievement and
foster positive change in teachers’ use of
those practices.”

Summary

Writing is important.

Student writing skills need to improve.

Thus, there is a national need to improve the teaching of writing.

And this means there is a national need to improve the teaching of the teaching of writing!

The National Writing Project is well positioned to meet that need.

Talking point #3

The NWP network of local sites serves significant numbers of teachers

AND

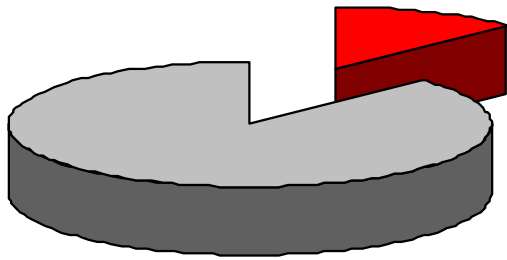
the network can be further expanded to serve ever more teachers and schools.

Three Million Teachers!

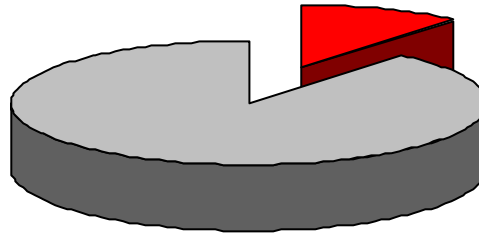
There are over 2 million teachers of language arts, and over 1 million teachers of other subjects that call for writing

- 3.4 million teachers in the U.S.
- 1.8 million are K-6 teachers
- 1.6 million are 7-12 teachers;
of these, 380,000 teach language arts

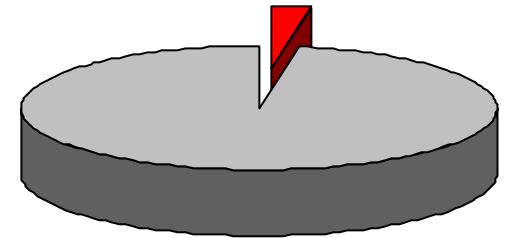
Each year the National Writing Project currently reaches significant numbers of teachers at each grade level



**1 out of every
8
High School
Language Arts
teachers**



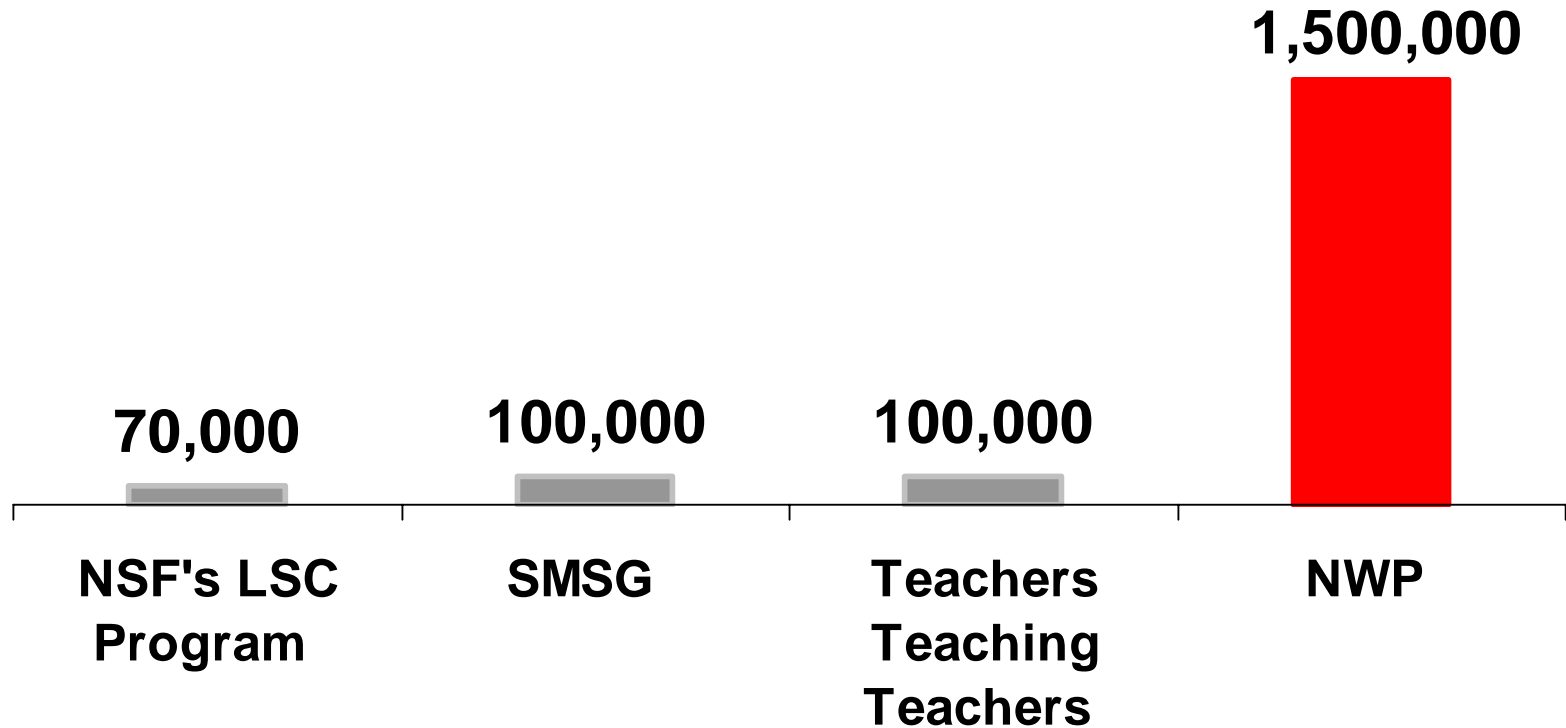
**1 out of every
9
Middle School
Language Arts
teachers**



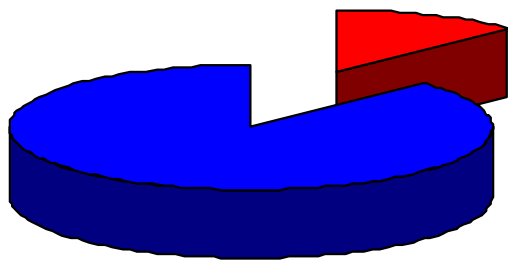
**1 out of every
35
Elementary
school
teachers**

(Source: annual site survey for 2000-01)

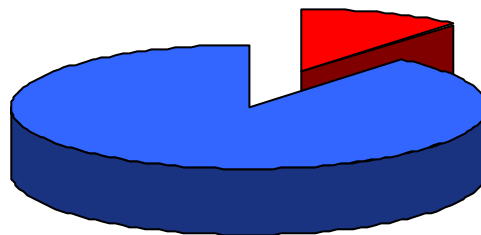
In its 30 years, NWP has served more teachers than other large professional development efforts



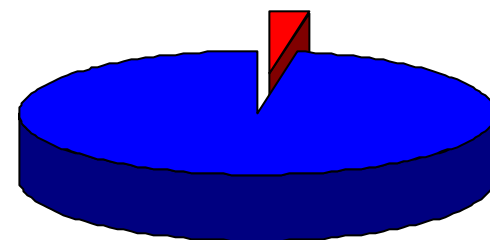
... but there is a need to serve more



**7 out of every
8
High School
Language Arts
teachers**



**8 out of every
9
Middle School
Language Arts
teachers**

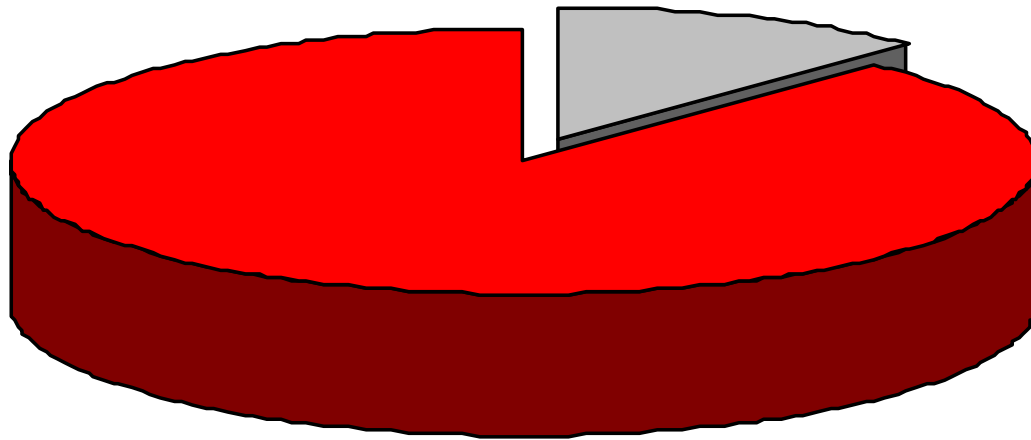


**34 out of every
35
Elementary
school
teachers**

(Source: annual site survey for 2000-01)

There is room for growth by NWP sites in densely populated areas

88 of the 100 largest school districts are served directly or indirectly by at least one NWP site



Largest school districts served by NWP

The NWP works in more than 600 rural schools each year; but there are 25,595 rural schools in the U.S.



The need for professional development is ongoing

1 in 6 teachers is “new”—within the first 3 years of their profession

- Each year, about 70,000 teachers retire.
- Annually, about 510,000 teachers in the nation are in their first three years of teaching.

Building on the foundation: NWP strategies for expanding the number of teachers served

1. Growing sites that already exist
2. Establishing new sites
3. Establishing satellite sites

Summary

The NWP reaches across the nation and serves many teachers, year in and year out.

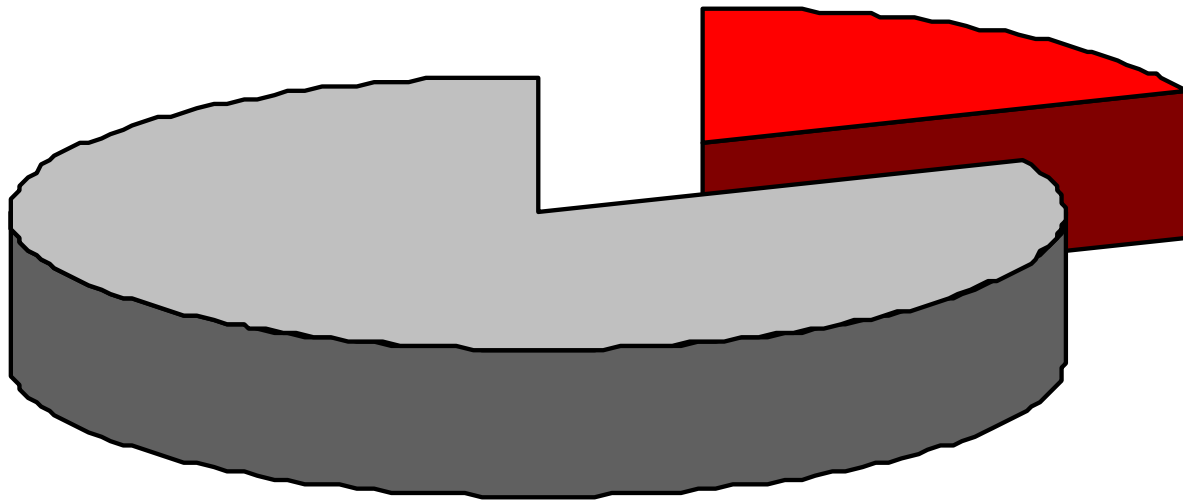
Yet to serve a greater proportion of the nation's teachers, the NWP needs to continue to grow.

Investment in the NWP takes advantage of the work done to date and leverages all previous investments.

Talking point #4

*The National Writing Project
makes cost efficient use of
federal funds.*

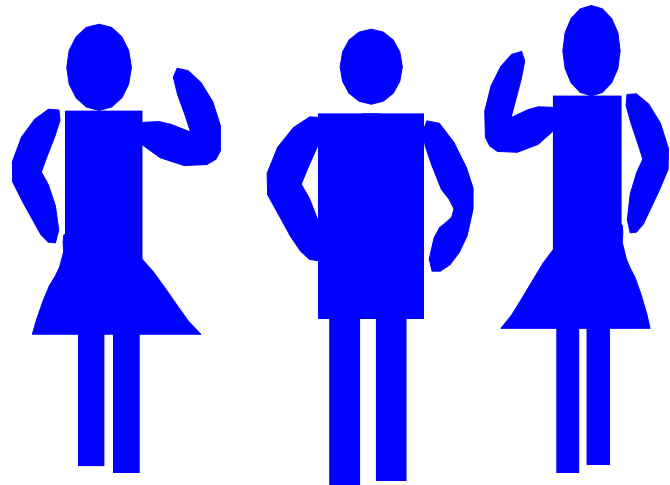
For every \$1 of Federal NWP grants to sites, the sites leverage an average of \$4.13 in state and local dollars



(Source: annual site survey for 2003-04)

NWP sites provide high quality professional development at a very low cost to the Federal Government

\$54.03 per teacher participant



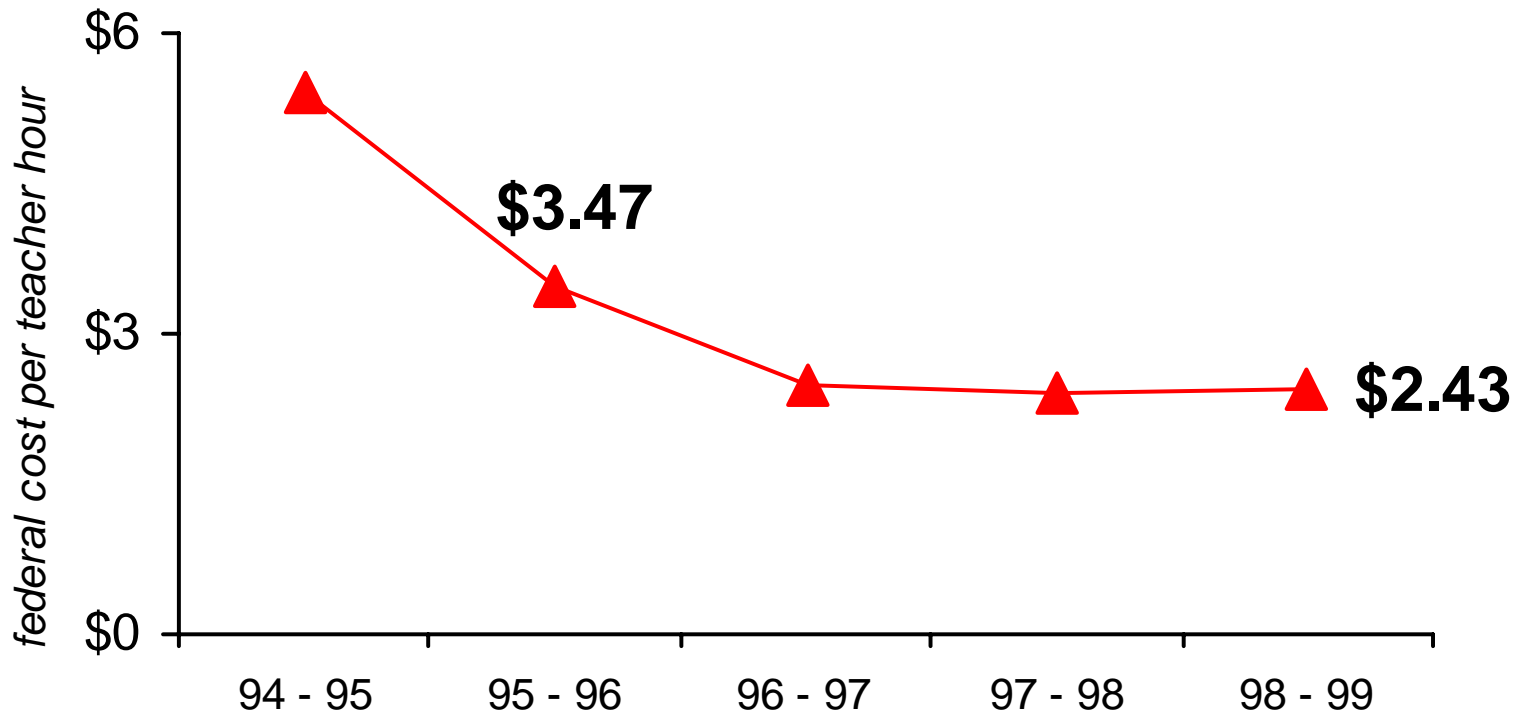
\$63.54 per program hour



\$4.07 per teacher contact-hour

(Source: annual site survey for 2003-04)

As sites grow and mature, the Federal cost per teacher contact-hour falls



(Source: five-year study of 94-95 cohort of beginning sites)

Summary

The National Writing Project is an effective and very cost-efficient investment of Federal funds.

A final message—

**The National Writing Project
is not “just another project.”**

The NWP is a unique national network of local professional development sites



- Well established over past three decades
- Able to grow and sustain itself
- Able to deepen and expand its work with teachers
- Provides national support for local work

END