
Explaining The National Writing Project

NWP Spring Meeting 2009

Inverness Research
Dr. Mark St. John
Dr. Laura Stokes

Inverness Research

- Studying the NWP for over fifteen years
- Providing an independent perspective on the NWP as a **unique investment in the improvement of education**

Explaining the NWP

- Two key questions:
 - What is the NWP?
 - Why should the federal government continue to invest in it?

Question 1

- What is the NWP?

1) The NWP is a national professional development network

- More than 200 local sites in all 50 states and DC
- Sites are school-university partnerships
- Network is nationally administered
- Network is unified by a shared model

2) The NWP provides effective, high-quality programs

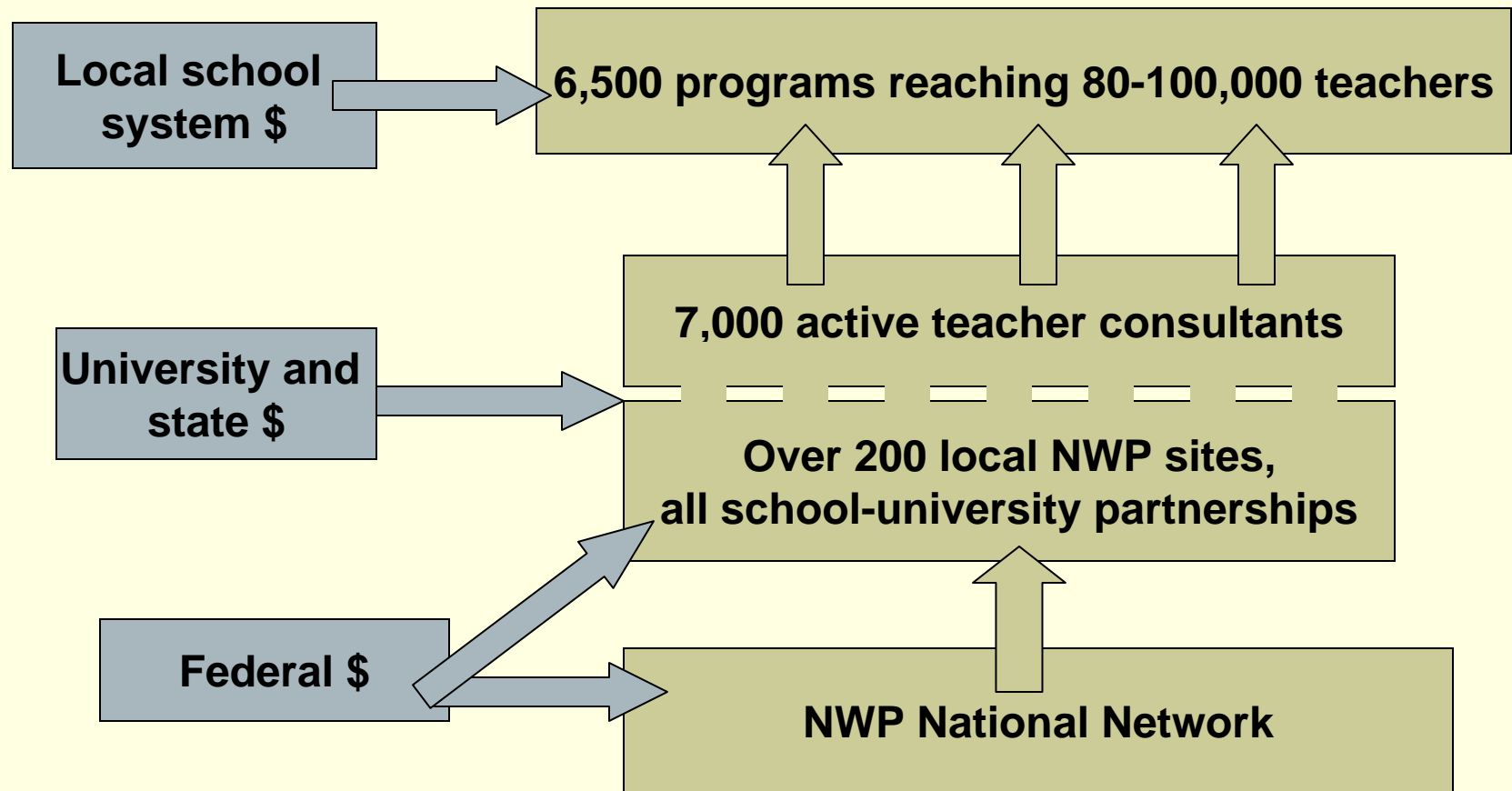
- Decades of research
- Nine recent research studies of student results (NWP Research Brief)
- Seven annual surveys of teachers (Inverness Research report)
- National study underway (SRI)

3) The NWP is a long-term, large scale network that benefits millions of students each year

- 80,000-100,000 individual teachers served annually
- 35 years of cumulative impact

The NWP is the longest standing and largest professional development program in US history

4) Federal, state and local educational agencies share funding for NWP programs



5) The NWP is a national professional development infrastructure



NWP meets the criteria for a strong national infrastructure

- Addresses an important national need
- Provides for equitable national access
- Empowers an array of context-specific local services
- Assures consistently high-quality services
- Allows cumulative growth and development of capacity
- Is cost-efficient, with multiple sources of funding
- Provides a vehicle for future efficient investments

Question 2

- Why should the federal government continue to invest in the National Writing Project?

Background:

Investment vs. Expenditure

- Expenditures pay for goods and services that are consumed
- **Investments create capital that is useful in the future production of goods and services**

Background:

Current federal funding climate

Federal agencies seek to invest in work that is:

1) Ready to go now

And also

2) Promotes long term growth of our nation's
infrastructure

Background:

Current national priorities

- Education is a top-stated priority in this new administration
- Teacher development is a priority within education

Why should the federal government continue to invest in the National Writing Project?

Reason 1: Capacity for professional development is a national concern

Research shows that

- Good teaching is key to student learning
- Teacher learning is key to good teaching
- The nation's school systems lack the capacity to provide good professional development for all teachers

Conclusion from 2009 international study of professional development

“Given what we know about ... the current lack of capacity and infrastructure of many school organizations to provide the kinds of powerful learning opportunities that teachers need to support student learning, the question that remains is this — **how can states, districts, and schools build their capacities to provide the kinds of high-quality professional development that is effective in building teacher knowledge, improving their instruction, and supporting student learning?**”

**From: *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the U.S. and Abroad* (p. 62).
Wei, et al., National Staff Development Council (2009)**

The National Writing Project is a proven approach to building PD capacity

- Provides infrastructure and a proven model for high-quality professional development
- Provides the faculty and teacher leadership necessary for high-quality professional development
- Is scaled to work at a nation-wide level
- Is sustainable

Reason # 2: **The NWP is "shovel ready"**

The NWP is doing work now and is ready to do more :

- More than 200 fully functional sites across the country
- Over 700 experienced site directors and co-directors in place (each with an average of 6 years of experience)
- 7,000 teacher consultants providing support to their colleagues

Why should the federal government continue to invest in the NWP?

Reason 2: The NWP is “geared up” and “shovel-ready.”

In the next year, NWP sites and people can:

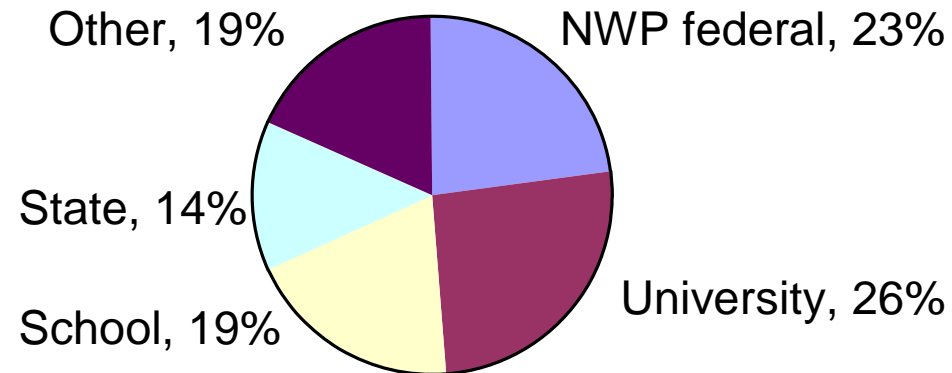
- Serve 80,000 to 100,000 individual teachers nationwide
- Serve another 45,000 participants in summer writing camps
- Offer 6,500 programs
- Provide 120,000 hours of programming

Why continue to invest in the NWP?

Reason 3: The federal investment in the NWP generates even more investment from states and local districts

Every federal dollar going to the sites is matched by \$2.50 from other sources

Funding of NWP Sites - Five Year Average



Why continue to invest in the NWP?

Reason 4: Investments in infrastructure are long-term, cost-effective investments—if they are steadily sustained

The NWP is a cumulative investment:

It builds on and maintains the value of
previous investments

- A large-scale infrastructure takes years to build
- Each additional year of funding maintains, strengthens, and expands the existing infrastructure
- Each additional year of funding leverages the previous investments
- Failure to sustain investment threatens the entire infrastructure

Investing in infrastructure

“There is a fundamental difference between borrowing to support current consumption and borrowing to raise the future standard of living. Unlike expenditures for many other federal programs, infrastructure programs leave behind an asset on the federal government's balance sheet... Federal deficits sap our economic strength, and must inevitably be paid. But failing to support long-term growth could prove even more vexing.”

Center for Strategic and International Studies:
Guiding Principles for Strengthening America's Infrastructure (2006).

Summary

The NWP is the kind of investment the nation needs right now:

- Serves a national need
- Follows a proven, effective model
- Functions at high capacity -- right now
- Produces high returns in “educational capital”
- Functions as a lasting improvement infrastructure for the nation’s education system