NNSTOY Strategy Refresh: Draft Logic Model

NNSTOY, an organization of recognized teacher leaders, will use our respected voice and knowledge to put great teaching and learning at the center of the education debate by advocating for policies and practices that create...

PRIMARY GOAL

...the kind of teaching profession that attracts, develops, retains, leverages, and advances top talent, particularly through teacher leadership.

For example, advance NNSTOY's five structures of professional standards, collaborative practice, actionable feedback, distributed leadership, and career continuums.

SECONDARY GOAL

...the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary to support great teaching and learning, including college- and career-ready reforms.

For example, use our voice strategically to advance key reforms through the lens of great teaching and learning, such as the need for high-quality systems of assessment.

VIRTUOUS CYCLE

More talented individuals will enter the profession, improve their practice, become highly effective, and stay in the profession.

Critical reforms will advance great teachers and great teaching and learning.

More students will be taught by highly effective teachers and will benefit from reforms that advance great teaching and learning.

All students will be ready for college, career, and life -- and to lead the lives they dream.
NNSTOY Strategy Refresh

Introduction

The National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY) is a network of exemplary educators from across the nation – from every discipline and across all grade levels – who have been recognized for excellence in practice and trained in policy and advocacy. We have both an opportunity and a commitment as teacher leaders to use our voice to improve education for all students through policy, practice, and advocacy. Building on more than 60 years of “recognition, responsibility, and repayment,” NNSTOY reenergized its work three years ago with a new vision, mission, and strategic plan. Today, we have the opportunity to affirm and refresh our strategy for the next three years to define our optimal role and ensure that our work – both that of individual State Teachers of the Year (STOYs) and Finalists, and of NNSTOY itself – has the greatest possible impact on expanding equal opportunity and success for all students by transforming teaching and learning.

What We Believe and Do

This is a critical moment in education in which there is both great opportunity and great need to transform the teaching profession to ensure that every student has access to a great teacher and masters the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, career, and life.

For the first time, America has a burgeoning, nationwide consensus that the goal of its education systems must be to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college, career, and life – and the ability to achieve their full potential and live the lives they dream of living. This is essential to the success of every child and of our nation itself in terms of both succeeding in the global economy and contributing to an increasingly diverse democracy. To advance this goal, states, districts, and dedicated teachers across the nation are working to transition over the next several years to new college and career ready standards, high-quality systems of assessment, and more meaningful systems of accountability. This is a transformation we believe in, but it must be done right – with a clear focus on engaging educators in decision-making, positively impacting teaching and learning, and continuously improving over time. The gap between our nation’s current outcomes and our new goals is substantial, particularly with regard to poor and minority students. What will matter most to the success of this endeavor is our ability to ensure high-quality teaching and learning for every child.

As a result, this is also a critical moment of need and opportunity for the teaching profession. Longstanding research and experience confirm that the greatest in-school impact on student success comes from high-quality teaching. Highly effective educators have significant positive effects on students that are immediate (in terms of learning gains) and long-term (in terms of school and life outcomes). Based on our understanding of the science of learning, we need well-prepared teachers who are able to engage students, personalize learning, cultivate student agency, use data and technology to meet student needs, identify and solve complex problems, and ensure student mastery of deeper learning. We need to offer these highly effective educators reasons to stay and thrive in teaching. Yet today, we are not recruiting, preparing, placing, supporting, retaining, or advancing the teaching force we need to achieve that vision. There are serious gaps in access to effective educators. Some of our highest performing educators are leaving the profession at alarming rates. And the role of teachers is too often limited by our education system's outdated, narrow notions of isolated classroom practice.
NNSTOY and its members are prepared and ready to work as partners with policymakers, school leaders, and researchers to shift this paradigm. At this critical moment, we must act boldly in order to promote a “virtuous cycle” in which the shifts we need in teaching and learning to achieve college, career, and life-readiness for all students in turn promote shifts in the teaching profession that can attract, retain, and advance the great teachers and teaching that we need.

To achieve this vision in which every student has access to a great teacher, we must transform the teaching profession. This should be the centerpiece of our national education agenda and inform all other reforms, and it remains the centerpiece of NNSTOY’s vision. This transformation must come from within, with educators involved in key decision-making about change. This must begin with a focus on advancing teacher leadership at the national level, in key states, and across the field.

Promoting teacher leadership means developing and empowering highly effective teachers to take a leadership role in innovation, collective capacity, and continuous improvement—in policy, practice, and advocacy. This shift is critical for several reasons. What we need most to achieve college, career, and life ready outcomes for all students is that they benefit from great teaching and learning. Teacher leaders are uniquely knowledgeable about the policies and practices that enable great teaching, learning, and leading. Further, only if we advance teacher leadership will we recruit, retain, and leverage the highly effective teachers we need. Finally, if the transformation we want in our education system is to succeed, it cannot be top down. Teacher leaders provide a deep, distributed pool of talent that can lead, support, and sustain this change from within our schools and classrooms.

Advancing teacher leadership requires creating systems in which teacher leaders can thrive and building the ranks of highly effective teachers to become teacher leaders. We must own and advance both of these responsibilities simultaneously. This means informing efforts to improve the recruitment, preparation, development, evaluation, retention, and advancement of teacher leaders. To frame this effort, NNSTOY has identified five key structures to transform the profession, including the need for guiding principles of excellence in the profession, support for collaborative practice in the school day, provision of actionable feedback to every educator, creation of distributed leadership models, and establishment of a professional career continuum.

What is teacher leadership?
Teacher leadership is the process by which highly effective educators take on roles at the classroom, school, district, state, or national levels in order to advance the profession, improve educator effectiveness, and/or increase access to great teaching and learning for all students.

What does it mean to be a teacher leader?
A teacher leader is a highly effective educator who is trained in and practices teacher leadership. Teacher leaders foster a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning; access and use research to improve practice and student learning; promote professional learning for continuous improvement; facilitate improvements in instruction and student learning; promote the appropriate use of assessments and data for school and district improvement; improve outreach and collaboration with families and community; engage in shaping and implementing policy; and advocate for student learning and the profession.

What does it mean to be an effective educator?
A teacher is “effective” if his or her mastery of teaching and learning positively impacts student learning growth and mastery of critical knowledge and skills, and undertakes continuous improvement in teaching and learning over time.

2
Finally, this work of increasing teaching excellence must be at the center of the education improvement agenda. This means that other college and career ready reforms must be designed and implemented in a manner that creates the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary to advance teacher leadership and promote great teaching for every child. This is the lens that we will bring to bear on education policy at the national level, in leading states, and across the field.

**NNSTOY is uniquely positioned to help chart this course and lead this change.**

NNSTOY and our members believe that the question at hand is not *whether* we implement the changes necessary to prepare all students for college, career, and life, but how best to implement them in a manner that engages and advances teacher leadership, improves educator effectiveness, and creates the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary to support great teaching and learning for all students. We must capitalize on this unique moment of need and opportunity.

NNSTOY is a network of talented, effective educators who have been publicly recognized for their impact and commitment. NNSTOY and its member STOYs and Finalists serve as essential leaders in thoughtful transformation of our education systems. Our numbers are small by definition—of the 3.7 million teachers in the nation, only up to 56 are chosen each year to represent their states, territories, or entities, with varying numbers of Finalists—yet our voice and our ability to partner with likeminded organizations and other effective educators across the country positions NNSTOY to be an important agent of change.

NNSTOY is uniquely suited to advocate for policies informed by great practice and to grow and empower the field of teacher leaders. Our members have credibility both in the field and with policymakers, where we serve as nonpartisan partners providing authentic classroom perspectives focused on great teaching and learning. Through individual and collective action, NNSTOY and our members serve as a bridge between policymakers and practitioners. STOYs and Finalists can use their in-depth knowledge of what successful teaching and learning looks like to advance and inform policy. NNSTOY has established a trajectory of work across research, policy, practice, and advocacy that positions us well for our next phase of work at this critical moment.

In November 2011, NNSTOY published a three-year strategic plan that anticipated this moment of transition in education; articulated a bold vision of all students learning from effective educators; and recognized the need for a new definition of what it means to be an effective teacher, rooted in innovation, creativity, and collaboration. Through research, engagement with leading educators and experts, publications, outreach, and advocacy, we identified a new vision of teacher career pathways that hold promise for advancing the teaching profession, and for recruiting, supporting, and retaining the kinds of highly effective teachers we need. From there, we built outward to further advance the role of teacher leaders and identified the five structures to transform the teaching profession discussed above. Through these and other efforts, NNSTOY has continued to establish itself as a valued voice at the national table and has made important contributions to research, practice, and policy.

The purpose of this updated strategic plan is to build upon our work to date, and refresh NNSTOY’s strategy for the next three critical years. In doing so, we largely affirm our current vision and mission but focus and advance our theory of change to chart a course whereby NNSTOY can play an even greater role in advancing teacher leadership, transforming the profession, and establishing the conditions, capacity, and culture that we need to support great teaching and learning so that all students master the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, career, and life.
NNSTOY Strategy

**NNSTOY’s Vision:** NNSTOY envisions a transformed teaching profession that provides access to great teaching and learning for all students thereby dramatically improving student outcomes for college, career, and life.

**NNSTOY’s Mission:** NNSTOY, an organization of teacher leaders, seeks to transform the teaching profession by using our credible voice to support policies and practices that advance teacher leadership, educator effectiveness, and the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary to support great teaching and learning for all students.

**NNSTOY's Theory of Change:** When we advance teacher leadership to transform the profession and promote the conditions, capacity, and culture needed to foster great teaching and learning for all students, then greater numbers of talented individuals will enter, remain, and impact the profession, access to effective educators and great teaching and learning will increase, and student outcomes for college, career, and life will dramatically improve.

**NNSTOY's Goals:**
1. Advance teacher leadership both in the field and by focusing policy at all levels on putting great teaching and learning at the center of the education debate, and creating the kind of profession that attracts, develops, retains, leverages, advances, and values top talent.
2. Ensure that college and career ready education reforms promote the conditions, capacity, and culture needed to advance teacher leadership, improve educator effectiveness, and increase access to great teaching and learning for all students.
3. Strengthen NNSTOY’s capacity and position to increase the cadre of teacher leaders, advance teacher leadership and educator effectiveness, and transform the teaching profession.

**Five Priority Outcomes and Corresponding Strategies:**

[PLEASE NOTE THAT THE STRATEGIES IN ITALICS BELOW ARE EXAMPLES]

NNSTOY will pursue these goals over the next three years through a focused, integrated set of outcomes and strategies that are designed to promote our unique role, center our efforts, and measure our progress. NNSTOY is acutely aware that our capacity is limited, and we must be focused and selective in our work. As an organization, we intend to stay true to these priority goals and outcomes, and to be deliberate in evaluating other opportunities and strategies that arise over time. We will also continue to pursue key partnerships with likeminded organizations to enhance our impact.

1. Three to five priority states (and/or leading districts within those states) will adopt structures and policies that (1) advance teacher leadership to transform the profession, and/or (2) support the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary for teacher leadership and great teaching and learning to grow.
   
   a. Develop state chapters to build cadres of STOYs and Finalists in a few key states who serve as policy advisors and model teacher leaders for teachers in the states.
b. *Put together an action agenda for each state with a state chapter that outlines the key structures that must be built and policies that must be changed to advance teacher leadership in the state (such as NNSTOY’s five structures) and the conditions, capacity, and culture to transform teaching and learning and improve student outcomes (such as high-quality systems of assessment).*

c. *Harness the power of teacher leaders and state chapter members to use their voice and advocate for structures and policies that will advance teacher leadership and help the state to transform the profession.*

2. Two to four national (not necessarily federal) policies and/or initiatives will be advanced that (1) promote teacher leadership to transform the profession, and/or (2) support the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary for teacher leadership and great teaching and learning to grow.

   a. *Develop a national policy agenda to advance teacher leadership, educator effectiveness, and the conditions, capacity, and culture needed to transform the profession.*

   b. *Determine priority issues and establish a process for NNSTOY to use its voice and advocate for policy priorities with regard to how we can best support the shifts in teacher leadership, effective educators, and great teaching and learning needed to ensure college, career, and life outcomes for all students.*

   c. *Serve as “matchmaker” to connect NNSTOY members with key advocacy strategies and opportunities to advance the national policy agenda.*

3. At least 1000 teacher leaders annually will be supported/empowered and will document their work using policy, practice, advocacy, research, and more to advance teacher leadership, increase educators’ effectiveness, and support the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary for teacher leadership to grow.

   a. *Harness the power of the NNSTOY network and key partners to build the field of teacher leaders by providing toolkits or learning modules/opportunities to STOYs, Finalists, and other great teachers that prepare them to be teacher leaders and support them in their teacher leadership.*

   b. *Partner with other teacher leader organizations to identify highly effective educators and train them in teacher leadership.*

   c. *Connect teacher leaders to opportunities to exercise their teacher leadership.*

   d. *Develop a format and repository to collect information/case studies about teacher leadership that can be used to demonstrate its impact and success.*

4. Teacher leadership, and the impact that it has on the teaching profession and student success, will be a well-understood and embraced leverage point for improving education among leaders at the national, state, and local levels.

   a. *Partner with leading research organizations to undertake research that demonstrates the impact of teacher leadership on student outcomes.*

   b. *Publish and widely disseminate powerful articulations of NNSTOY’s vision for a transformed teaching profession, the role of teacher leadership in transforming the profession, and the impact of a transformed profession on student outcomes.*
c. Develop forums, or take advantage of existing forums, such as national convenings of education leaders at every level, to explain the importance of teacher leadership, the ways in which it can be cultivated, and our vision for a transformed profession.

5. NNSTOY will be a more widely sought-after voice on advancing teacher leadership, transforming the profession and building the necessary conditions, capacity and culture and NNSTOY will have built its own capacity to support its members in moving this agenda.
   a. Secure core support for NNSTOY's functions, including both direct advocacy and support of its members in their teacher leadership.
   b. Develop national partnerships with other teacher organizations to advance teacher leadership.
   c. Build NNSTOY membership of STOYs and Finalists.

---

### NNSTOY Strategy Refresh 3 Year Plan

#### Outputs
- Develop state chapters to build cadres of STOYS and Finalists in key states
- Assemble an action agenda for each state with a state chapter
- Harness the power of teacher leaders to advocate for specific structures and policies that advance teacher leadership
- Develop a national policy agenda
- Determine priority issues and establish a process for NNSTOY to partner with policymakers in designing the policies that shape America's classrooms
- Connect NNSTOY members with advocacy opportunities
- Harness the power of the NNSTOY network by providing toolkits and learning modules to grow teacher leaders
- Partner with other teacher leader organizations to advance teacher leadership
- Connect teacher leaders with opportunities to influence policy and practice
- Develop teacher leadership case studies
- Partner with leading research organizations
- Publish and widely disseminate powerful articulations of teacher leaders and NNSTOY's vision
- Develop forums to explain the importance of teacher leadership and the NNSTOY vision
- Secure core support for NNSTOY's functions, including direct advocacy and member support to advance our strategic plan goals
- Develop national partnerships to advance our strategic plan goals
- Build NNSTOY membership

#### Outcomes
- Three to five priority states (and/or leading districts within those states) will adopt structures and policies that advance teacher leadership by increasing educator effectiveness and supporting the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary for teacher leadership to grow.
- Two to four national policies and/or initiatives will be advanced that promote the conditions, capacity, and culture needed to promote teacher leadership, improve educator effectiveness, and increase access to great teaching and learning for all students.
- At least 1000 teacher leaders will be annually supported and will document their work using policy, practice, advocacy, research, and more to advance teacher leadership, increase educator effectiveness, and support the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary for teacher leadership to grow.
- Teacher leadership, and the impact that it has on the teaching profession and student success, will be a well-understood and embraced leverage point for improving education among leaders at the national, state, and local levels.
- NNSTOY will be a respected and sought-after voice on advancing teacher leadership, transforming the profession and building the necessary conditions, capacity, and culture. NNSTOY will have built its own capacity to support its members in moving this agenda.

#### Impact
1. Advance teacher leadership both in the field and by focusing policy at all levels on promoting educator effectiveness (thereby increasing the cadre of potential teacher leaders) and fostering the conditions, capacity, and culture necessary to enable teacher leadership.
2. Ensure that college and career ready education reforms promote the conditions, capacity, and culture needed to advance teacher leadership, improve educator effectiveness, and increase access to great teaching and learning for all students.
3. Strengthen NNSTOY's capacity and position to increase the cadre of teacher leaders, advance teacher leadership and educator effectiveness, and transform the teaching profession.