Reflections from the Classroom
Teachers Explore the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Research Experience and its Influence on Future Education Practice

A COLLABORATIVE REPORT FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE VIVA MET IDEA EXCHANGE


Prepared by: Members of the VIVA MET Research Teachers’ Idea Exchange, on behalf of the 156 MET Research teacher volunteers who participated in the VIVA Idea Exchange

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Abstract & Summation: Empowered by an innovation in crowd sourcing technology that we call WikiWisdom™, teacher volunteers who had participated in the MET Research spent hundreds of hours together on-line sharing the ideas that sprang from their experience as participants in the research initiative. A group of 10 teachers, still working exclusively online, distilled the group’s collective experience into eight issues that should be afforded deeper work to maximize the impact of the MET Research results for teachers and students.

Partners: The MET Research Project teacher volunteers who joined the VIVA MET Idea Exchange work in: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC; Dallas Independent School District, TX; Denver Public Schools, CO; Hillsborough County Public Schools, FL; Memphis City Schools, TN; and New York City Department of Education, NY.
Introduction

The VIVA (Voice Ideas Vision Action) Teachers Idea Exchange invited 2,000 teacher volunteers who participated in the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) research project between 2009 and 2012 to share their perspectives and experiences about their participation in this one-of-a-kind research project and its influence on their professional practices. This VIVA Idea Exchange occurred as the three-year research project was coming to a conclusion and attention is turning to the implications for teaching practice, grant making and research in American public education.

The online VIVA Idea Exchange uses WikiWisdom™, a combination of technology and peer collaboration, created by New Voice Strategies. Facilitated by a professional moderator, the conversation is open to peers seeking a safe, productive and easily accessible avenue for joint problem-solving and action.


The VIVA MET Teachers Idea Exchange was conducted in three phases:

During Phase I, MET volunteer teachers from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District, Dallas Independent School District, Denver Public Schools, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Memphis City Schools and the New York City Department of Education were invited to share their ideas in response to these questions:

“We are all short of time and overloaded with too much information. What are your ideas for using your own personal and professional networks to share the knowledge/insight you’ve gained from the MET project with fellow teachers across the country? With community leaders, school officials and elected leaders in your own community? In your state?”

In response, 156 members added 74 new ideas and shared 73 comments with one another.

During Phase II, 10 teachers who emerged as thought leaders in Phase I, as measured by proprietary participation analytics, were invited to join The VIVA MET Teachers Writing Collaborative. Their assignment: Take the ideas presented during Phase I and summarize them into insights and suggestions for how grant makers and public education administrators can apply the teachers’ experiences in the MET research and the research findings to future initiatives.

Phase III of the process began on Feb. 14, 2013, when the members of the Writing Collaborative presented their ideas to Vicki L. Phillips, Director of Education, College Ready, U.S. Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

At New Voice Strategies’ VIVA Teachers, we believe in the inspiration that grows from pragmatic experience and in the power of individual voices to make big change. We are inspired by the ideas and perspectives of the teachers who participated in the VIVA MET Teachers’ Idea Exchange.
Many thanks to the VIVA MET Teacher Leaders: **Katie Cardus, Nathan Grover, Andria Mitchell, Kwesi Ndizibah, Andrew Neale, Ann Neary, Melony Smith-Wellington, Jim Szewc, Kelly Waller** and **Zaneta Williams**, whose profiles can be found at the end of this report. The innumerable hours these teachers spent grappling with big ideas and small details made this work possible.

We wish to thank the MET research public school district partners in this endeavor, the **Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Dallas Independent School District, Denver Public Schools, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Memphis City Schools**, and the **New York City Department of Education**.
Overview

Reflections from the Classroom: Teachers Explore the MET Research Experience and Its Influence on Future Education Practice

“I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”

– Albert Einstein

As a teacher, Albert Einstein worked to provide the right learning conditions for his pupils. More recently, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) research reminds us that if the new generation of students is to learn and be prepared for the changing world, we as a society must “create conditions for success.” This applies not only to the students, but to the educators who dedicate themselves to this profession. As volunteers in MET, 3000 teachers across the country had the extraordinary opportunity to view hours of video of our own work in the classroom. This proved a powerful experience for us and changed the way we think about developing and evaluating our craft.

Over the last few months, dedicated educators from across the nation who participated in the MET research have worked together online reflecting upon their own teaching experience and sharing with each other how they had benefited from being a participant in the MET project. We used pockets of available free time before and after school, on weekends, and over holiday break to compare our experiences from six vastly different public school districts.

Not unlike the conditions in which great teachers create for their students, this collaborative forum empowered us to share our comprehensive collection of passionate reflections about how participation in this study has refined our teaching practice and our thoughts about the future of the teaching profession.

Through this online, open-ended conversation, 10 MET participants, unknown to each other and from different geographic, socioeconomic and cultural corners of our country, teaching in schools of varying characteristics, put together a set of reflections and suggestions for possible next steps by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We relied not only on our own experiences, but on the ideas of over 150 teachers who participated in the Measures of Effective Teaching project and our collaborative writing project.

In examining our own backgrounds and teaching experience within varying school systems, our group has identified a refined, focused list of problems that directly affect teacher effectiveness and ultimately, student achievement. From there the discussion shifted and we have collaborated on exactly how we think these problems can be solved in the near future and how we believe these solutions will ultimately support effective teaching practices.
Although most of our topics examined here could be intertwined in some way, we have collected these conversations and thoughts into four focus areas that influence all aspects of effective teaching as well as the profession, and will shape the future success of our education system. These main issues, or “buckets,” as we refer to them, are:

- The importance of creating collaborative partnerships between teachers and those developing the frameworks of effective teaching
- The necessity to create performance assessment systems for teachers and students that are relevant to classroom work
- The way in which we will use these measurements as components of overall evaluation and compensation
- The potential uses of technology and social media for students to grow academically and socially and teachers to develop professionally

It is our belief that through opportunities like this project, the teaching profession will evolve into a collaborative corps of highly effective, well-respected educators who create the right conditions in which students of today can learn. Meanwhile, the profession will show the world that the role of the teacher, constantly changing, constantly critiqued, and constantly refined will inevitably be most influential and integral to the future success of our children and society.
Reflections

Our Personal Reflections as Teacher Volunteers in The MET Research Project

“Once the students became accustomed to the camera, the true reflective experience began. The first year of the MET Project occurred during my second year of teaching. Self-reflection exercises helped me realize I needed to have more student-friendly lessons. So, instead of just teaching statistics, I used information about famous athletes. Instead of just teaching inequalities, I used signs from places around NYC and information about popular celebrities. Students then became more interested in the math surrounding this information. Math is everywhere! They wanted to get through the problems to figure out the answer to the riddle or an interesting fact.

It was not until the second year of the MET Project that I had the ability to work on my questioning technique. To create college-ready students, we need to create thinkers and problem solvers—not procedural robots. Effective questions aid students in their ability to think critically. By watching my videos and listening to the questions I was asking my students, I had the ability to revamp and improve my questioning technique. Although this was not the reason for the creation of the MET project, watching myself on tape was my basis for professional growth because it gave me the opportunity to self-reflect.” – Katie Cardus

“When I attend district training, teacher evaluations are always a topic of discussion. New teachers are uncertain of the process and are concerned about how it will affect their pay. Veteran teachers complain about the ‘fairness’ of the process and how it will affect their pay. Is it fair to include test scores in the overall rating? Is it fair to evaluate a teacher based upon one observation in the classroom? Is it fair to have a peer mentor (someone who does not know the teacher or, more importantly, the students who are in the class) evaluating them? Every time the topic is brought up, more concerns are raised. One of the obstacles teachers need to overcome is getting over the fear of the evaluation process and accepting it as a learning tool. There is always room for improvement. As good of a lesson a teacher might think she is presenting, a second set of eyes in the room may see something totally different (like the engagement of the students). Through my experience with the MET project, I have learned that the system is not perfect, and changes still need to be made. Not only does the evaluation process need to be reviewed, but teachers themselves need to change their outlook on evaluations as well.” – Kelly Waller
“My biggest takeaway from the original MET experience was that I needed to be a lot more reflective about my teaching, and on a more regular basis. I think doing the project forces you to be more mindful of teaching. The camera and microphone do wonders for the mind! I also feel that I need to continue using video to make sure I am incorporating various techniques into my teaching style to best serve my students who have various needs.”
– Kwesi Ndzibah

“Like other educators in this group, I have been part of the MET program from the beginning and have enjoyed how higher quality and more user-friendly technology has made the video capturing and review more seamless. Like most of the group, I have been awakened to many of my teaching flaws as well as surprised and even impressed at times when I have been at the top of my game. Last year in fact, I agreed to let some administrators review a handful of lessons to see how I would have ‘scored’ in our district’s evaluation system based upon some MET lessons. I wasn’t too surprised that I didn’t do as well as I did on the live observations I actually prepped heavily for. To me, this was one of the biggest takeaways and most self-reflective, to see that when I put more effort into a lesson and put forth the passion that I know I have, not only are the kids more engaged and the lesson more meaningful, but I can see myself as the teacher I want to be. The videos allowed me to see several flaws and mediocre teaching practices that I wish I didn’t possess at times. But, like everything else this evaluation process has taught me, there always will be ways in which I can improve as an educator. Keeping myself from becoming stagnant or unadventurous will be the only way I can keep up with a new generation of learners and continue to have a positive impact on my students and education.”
– Jim Szewc

“Now, with a little hindsight and two years of teaching in between, I personally and professionally value the MET experience more. I have read and continue to read many of the project reports, and continue to be involved in education reform and teacher pay-structure issues as much as I can. I strive to be keenly aware of what is going on in my room, and to keep up with my students’ needs and changing lives. In short, I try to be a better teacher. Sadly, not every teacher gets this opportunity. Current evaluation practices are far below what is needed, and the follow-up for professional development in response to evaluations is completely lacking. Hopefully, by being further involved in the project through VIVA, I can play a part in making a difference.”
– Andrew Neale
“My personal experience with the MET project helped me to see that there were many components that I had not observed in my classroom before the videotaping. The observations were an essential piece for me to have discussion around practice and pedagogy. What really opened my eyes was that much of what makes a teacher effective is embedded, not necessarily in what we do, but in how we do it. Evaluation of students and the use of assessments to drive effective teaching is the most important aspect of effective teaching. Videos alone do not necessarily uncover these attributes and if we don’t have multiple measures of effectiveness we are leaving out integral pieces to the evaluation. The videos, and observations are necessary not just for evaluation but for support to improve teaching practice, something that too often falls on the teacher alone. The MET project provided an all important window into understanding that teaching is a complex profession with many variables, and teasing out what works is the responsibility of teachers and administrators. – Nathan Grover

“As a result of the MET research project, I have made reflection a greater component of my teaching practices. When I say reflection I mean actually stopping and writing down what went well and what didn’t at the end of each lesson.

When I was recording myself and looking at the videos for MET, I was usually surprised by the mistakes I made. I immediately wrote down suggestions about how to better prepare for the questions that my students might ask, how to ask more thought-provoking questions, where to stand when I’m talking, should I walk around the room or stand in one spot, should I read or let the students read etc. I thought about these issues on a regular basis, but I didn’t make it a practice to write them down.

I teach inclusion, standard plus, and honors students, and the successes and failures within each class varies. By intentionally establishing a time to reflect, I am able to ‘be better’ tomorrow.” – Andria Mitchell
“Initially observations from my captured lessons revealed how quickly I spoke and how quickly I expected students to follow. Even when I thought (and actually said out loud), ‘I’ve said this three times, now pay attention,’ there were many times when the students were earnestly trying to grasp new material but I was moving too rapidly. I saw pens to paper, glances back to the board or me, and then looks of defeat. Those looks haunted me. And they made me slow my pace down to better match the students’ ability to comprehend. **Students need time to process. Now I am much more willing to spend the needed time for student mastery.**” – Ann Neary

In addition, while completing the paperwork required for MET evaluation, I noticed a critical misstep in my work. Whereas my lesson plans have embedded CCS that I am addressing in the unit on that day, my assessments did not. Herein lies a fundamental problem. To be fully useful for the teacher and the student, assessments must unite the efforts of teaching and learning. They cannot merely be a grading tool for single assignments. As the MET project winds down, I have discovered another means to attain my goal of student achievement.” – Ann Neary

“Initially, I was very nervous about my instruction being captured on tape. Although I understood it was to be reflecting on the practice of teaching, I could not overcome the idea of ‘fault,’ and the sense that these videos would expose all of the things that I did ‘wrong’ in the classroom. I did not think about it revealing all of the things that I did right. As I nervously sat down to view the first video, what I found is that I naturally seemed to don a critical eye. I sat taking notes and checking those things that I felt worked really well and making note of those areas of weaknesses that needed further strengthening.

Now, nearly two years later, I can say that these videos helped me to see how I interact with my students, helped me to see how important it is to put into place policies and procedures that afford my class organization and structure, and has allowed me to quickly absorb into my repertoire those lessons that really work with my students.

One area that I realized I needed to improve were my assessments. Knowing that I was going to be videotaping really made me carefully plan my students’ experience in my classroom. The new dedicated attention I paid to what and how my students were learning eventually led me to look more closely at how I assessed my students. I eventually realized that my assessment and instruction were not lining up, and at best I was measuring my students’ ability to recall information and at worst their ability to take tests. Once I began to make a concentrated effort at aligning my instruction, student practice, and my assessments, I saw growth. In fact, my ninth-grade students showed more gains than any of my previous classes in the past four years. This experience has proven to have a positive impact on me, which has resulted in a positive impact on my students.” – Melony Smith-Wellington
There were a few ‘aha’ moments that I garnered from the MET project. One of the biggest lessons I learned from participating in the MET project was how important every phase of the teaching experience is to the student and the teacher, especially as it relates to the visual aspect of the process and perspective.

Last year’s taping was particularly eye-opening for me because it made me see my classroom from the perspective of my students and the people who would be viewing the tape that I submitted. Because I had to adjust the camera and make sure that I captured the lesson as well as the student’s faces, it made me ponder the significance of the word ‘perspective. How does my handwriting look on the board? Could it be more legible? What do the walls in my classroom look like? Are they too ‘busy?’ If I had to come into my classroom as a student every day, would I be distracted or would I focus on the lesson that was delivered? Is my classroom presenting a welcoming feel to the students who come into it every day?

I then wondered if my objective was clear enough for my students to understand, I wondered if I talked too much, and did not give them a chance to engage in classroom discussions with me. I pondered and thought more about the delivery of my instruction, and I thought about how effective I am in the classroom.

The camera set up process made me take the literal act of videotaping and apply it to the concept of perspective. I began to put myself in the position of my students, I thought more about what my instruction was like for them, and I think because I thought more about it, I believe that my instruction improved.” – Zaneta Williams
Proposed Initiatives to Maximize the Impact of MET Research Findings on Teaching Practice

Teachers Need to Be Partners in Developing the Framework to Measure Effective Teaching

INITIATIVE ONE

Teacher performance should have a higher weighting than students’ standardized test scores in all evaluation circumstances. Teacher evaluations have to focus on classroom activities, and we need to build the capacity necessary to use multiple measures of teachers’ work.

Statement of the Problem

Although there is increasing evidence that demonstrates links between the effectiveness of a classroom teacher and the level of student scores on a standardized test, the use of student tests in teachers’ performance evaluation has created much controversy. Some experts say that the pressure of standardized testing has forced teachers to pay attention to students they previously ignored, while schools could rid themselves of the incompetent teachers. On the other hand, teachers are feeling constrained and demoralized by the constant scrutiny of standardized tests when they are being evaluated on their students’ performance on these tests. Too much professional judgment and creativity is lost when we over-emphasize student test scores in an overall review of effective teaching.

Proposed Solutions

1. As stated in the MET report, “Nine Principles for Using Measures of Effective Teaching,” a balanced approach would be to allocate between 33 percent to 50 percent of the weight to student achievement. We see 50 percent as an extraordinarily high weight for student achievement tests and the norm for that measure should be closer to 33 percent. This is especially true in elementary school. We as a nation need to invest more in creating student standardized assessments that are reliable across a range of circumstances.

2. Allow for the teacher’s immediate supervisor, specifically the school principal, to have a greater weight in the overall rating since they are working more consistently and in direct contact with the teachers in the classroom. As valuable as Peer Mentors are, their evaluation should have much less weight on the overall rating since they do not have direct contact with the teacher, and may not be familiar with the school or classroom dynamic. Let their evaluation be for learning and reflection only.
3. With the ability to record and review classroom practice, teachers and school principals have more and more accurate information to know students and know the level of true engagement of students. As long as recording of actual classroom practice is available, principals and instructional leaders can reliably review teaching performance and use that information in professional evaluations.

4. Self evaluation is another important component of any effective teacher evaluation system. In our experience in MET, the opportunity to reflect on our own practice was invaluable.

**Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching**

We believe that principal and peer mentor observations are essential methods for evaluating teacher performance. Observation allows the school administrators to monitor teacher performance and reward effective teachers. Peer observations can increase reliability and bring fresh insights to both the school administration and teachers. Observations also keep teachers energetic. Observations encourage teachers to reflect upon their performance, lesson plans, and strategies. Participating in the MET program has given us the opportunity to reflect upon our own performance. After viewing a recorded lesson, we were able to determine if the students were truly engaged and the lesson was effective. Balancing data on classroom work with students’ standardized test scores should not discount the richer data that comes from observations and evaluation of classroom work.

Other important data points that offer insights about classroom activities are student surveys and peer reflection. All of these measures have validity, when designed and applied appropriately. Teachers from various grade levels, subject matters and settings should be part of a consortium to develop guidelines and resources for districts to draw on when selecting and weighting the criteria for measuring and evaluating teacher performance.
INITIATIVE TWO
Including teachers as formulators and facilitators in the teacher evaluation process will generate higher buy-in, will reduce the anxiety associated with evaluations for teachers, and will encourage collaboration between administrators and teachers as well as increase teacher effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem
Some of the teacher evaluation systems across the country are created and administered by persons who are not classroom teachers. The absence of teacher input in articulating expectations of effective teaching not only risks omitting invaluable measuring information, it often fosters a sense of unease and distrust between administrators and teachers. Not including teacher input in the formulation and administration of evaluations also exacerbates the fear and stress some teachers already have about being evaluated. Thus, rather than evaluations being tools to measure teacher effectiveness, many teachers feel evaluations are a means of placing blame on teachers. Poor evaluations that lack adequate feedback and support are often perceived as punitive. At times, evaluations are placed in the hands of administrators who use it as a political tool to control the retention of teachers in the schools where they work. Moreover, a teacher in need of assistance will not necessarily receive adequate or effective support when there is not a common, clearly understood set of expectations of what constitutes effective teaching. These are factors that can lead to the large turnover rate of teachers within schools nationwide. Data-rich evaluations, implemented in a context where expectations of effective teaching are clear to teachers, can reduce these risks, misperceptions and abuses.

Proposed Solutions
5. Create an “evaluation community” of educators that includes, but may not be limited to, highly qualified teachers, (who may be elected by their peers), and administrators who participate in the creation of evaluations and also facilitate the evaluation process.
6. This group of educators may not be limited to their own schools. To create a greater sense of cohesiveness within a school district, the evaluation community may evaluate teachers in other schools in their areas, and thus bridge even greater educational gaps that may exist between schools within a certain area of a district.
7. Multiple years of teacher evaluation should always be used in each annual review. Viewing past evaluations will give the evaluation community a perspective about the teacher’s instructional practices and can lead to a more active and better evaluation for all involved.
Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching

Careful attention needs to be paid to the standards set for the qualifications and skills of teachers serving as peer reviewers. These decisions need to be transparent, with objective definitions of teacher skills. Selecting teachers with strong skills to be a part of the formulation of evaluations will not only bring the “real world” experience into the formulation and administering of the evaluations, it will help teachers be more open to receiving feedback, collaborating with peers on improvement methods, and using the evaluation process to improve their practice. The quality of the feedback, the use of the information for professional development or skills building, when necessary, and the provision of support are essential in order to implement an evaluation system that drives excellence in the classroom. The distrust, anxiety, and undue stress that currently exist for many teachers would decrease tremendously. Involving teachers will build on the existing bonds among teachers who are “in the trenches together.” Formal roles for teachers in creating the evaluation process will repair an often torn and dismantled relationship that too many times exists between teacher and evaluator.

Teachers and administrators working together in the evaluation process will result in less stress and greater buy-in from the classroom teachers.
INITIATIVE THREE

Student and parent surveys can provide useful information about classroom practice. However, surveys need to be used differently depending on grade level.

Statement of the Problem

In elementary school, parents may have more reliable opinions than their children on classroom activities and expectations. Once their children are in middle school, parents are not always aware of what goes on each day. They are not checking their child’s book bag and students are becoming more independent. At this level and beyond, students have a more detailed understanding of what a teacher is actually doing each day. Students are the ones listening and trying to learn from a teacher’s lesson. Middle and high school students have regular substantive exchanges with teachers. So, who would be more valuable to decide a teacher’s worth?

Therefore, some value could be gained from surveys of children in middle and high school. But, we should always proceed with care in using student or parent surveys. Students could have a bias for any number of reasons and use the survey to express that bias. Additionally some subjects might just lend themselves to developing better student-teacher relationships than others. And, students who take subjects where they have the same teacher for multiple years might develop a better understanding of that teacher, whereas some teachers only teach beginning courses.

Proposed Solutions

8. Student surveys can be an additional data point in teacher evaluations but they should be weighted on a scale that factors in the age and grade of the students. If and when parent surveys are used, a scale that works in opposite weight to student surveys should be used.

Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching

Parent involvement is one of the most important aspects of the educational process of all children. Surveys and opinions are an effective way to ensure parents are included in the educational process, especially for the middle and high school students. Parents would have to be involved on some level with their child’s teachers in order to give an opinion about their teaching practices. This would not only potentially strengthen the relationship between the teacher and parent, but the parent and child. Student surveys would send the message to students that they should be involved in their own education and that they matter to the teacher and their parents. Once middle school is reached, students are able to decipher the effective teachers from the ineffective teachers. They are aware of the grades they are receiving, the quality of daily lessons, the grading policy of the teacher, and the support they receive from a teacher. At this level and beyond student surveys should play a role in teacher evaluation.
Student and Teacher Formative Assessments Work in Tandem

Successful Assessment of Effective Teaching Requires More Attention to Student Formative Assessments

While the MET Research explored definitions of effective teaching, effective use of assessments is absolutely necessary for effective instruction. We believe important work remains to equip teachers to use student performance data effectively. When assessment becomes embedded in the daily practice of teachers who understand how necessary a tool it is for success, then our schools will see how effective teachers can truly be.

INITIATIVE FOUR

Student formative feedback should be regular and informed by the data collected about their teachers’ effectiveness.

Effective teaching necessitates giving students regular and varied feedback on their work. As far back as 1971, Benjamin Bloom described the multitudinous benefits of providing students with regular feedback during their learning process through the use of formative assessments (“Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning;” Bloom, Hastings, Madeus, 1971). When used consistently and on a timely basis, formative assessment adapts teaching to meet student needs thereby making learning objectives and success through multiple pathways of learning obtainable. We believe strongly in the use of formative assessment and agree with the philosophy put forth by Bloom and Charlotte Danielson who champion assessment as a tool for learning and of learning (“The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument,” 2011, Danielson). But without the ability to develop, understand and use assessment properly, teachers cannot provide highly effective instruction.

A detailed action plan for assessment can be used to foster a school culture focused on school growth and academic achievement. This cannot be accomplished without specific and tailored professional development that builds professional integrity and authentic data. Designing assessment practices with proper professional development can be a catalyst for moving school culture forward with the intent to improve practice and student outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

As we begin to adopt Common Core Standards (CCS) across the nation, it is important that districts and schools focus efforts on creating supportive assessment tools. The development of assessment continues to be a subjective practice with little collaboration among teachers and administrators. Often it falls short of its intended purpose to provide “next step” instruction and merely records effort on a particular assignment.
And whereas we agree in principle that actionable use of data collected during assessment is critically important to further student growth, it rarely is put into practice. The creation of assessments, collection of authentic data, and the application of data, receives little attention or support. The following steps represent our recommendations for implementation at the school level. They address the need to foster understanding of the importance of usable assessment, collaboration in the creation of the assessments and provisions for assessments that align teaching practice with student learning outcomes in an actionable, real-time manner.

**Proposed Solutions**

9. Professional development for administrators and teachers focusing on the importance of creation and implementation of formative assessments.

10. Development of a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan that uses technology to collect data to make it possible to actually target instructional interventions for all students more effectively.

11. Dedicated time for teachers to unpack data, understand implications for student learning outcomes and to establish targeted interventions.

12. Funding is needed for formative assessment practice development, designated formative assessment leaders, and professional development to ensure that practices are consistent, aligned, and tailored to meet the schoolwide academic plan and CCS.

13. Increase collaboration of learning communities that focus on district, team, and individual formative assessment, so that the data collected can be used in and across schools as they develop ways to respond to their students.

**Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching**

As stated in the opening paragraph of the MET Project “Feedback for Better Learning,” “Teachers want to succeed, but typically lack the conditions for success. Teachers generally work in isolation.” Wise use of assessment drives effective teaching and we need to invest as much in building teachers’ skills at student assessment as we do in evaluating teacher effectiveness. Specifically, instruction on how to create CCS aligned assessments should be a collaborative effort engaging teachers from all disciplines so that they may develop competency in the work as well as create a level playing field for students. Both teachers and administrators must understand how to create, collect and apply data mined from the assessments in order to take goal-related “next steps.” Professional development will remove the “isolation” factor and bring to the forefront every educator’s goal of success.

Additionally, using the collected data to create an RTI plan provides a “big picture” view that responds to both individual student needs, and schoolwide academic plans. Appropriate interventions should provide tools necessary for closing achievement gaps and tailoring assessments to meet student needs. However, this vital work takes time. Time to develop, time to administer, time to evaluate findings, and time to plan next steps. Teachers need to know that their schools support them in their efforts to use assessment findings for enrichment activities.
In view of the substantial amount of work required to support assessment efforts, funding will be needed in several areas. Outside services may be requested for initial professional development training to help schools understand and develop their individual school goals. Companies that provide that training may need to return periodically for refresher courses and to further address school needs. Annual expenditures will have to be budgeted to cover development of assessments, technological support of data, and possible payment for a dedicated team focused on disseminating data. It is our hope that schools might find a “business partner” to offset the already exhausted school budgets we all face today.

Collaboration in creating formative assessments provides a catalyst for effective teaching.
Relationships Between Evaluation and Compensation

Compensation Should Be an Incentive for Excellence

INITIATIVE FIVE
Compensation and teaching performance need alignment.

Statement of the Problem

In the 1920s American teachers began to be paid on a step-based model with salary being increased according to years teaching and advanced education. The purpose was to assure that male/female/minority teachers were paid equitably. As a result most states and districts currently have a step pay system based upon years of teaching, and a teacher's level of education.

Teacher salaries are a hot topic. In a North Carolina district, pay increases were on hold for four years and have not even kept up with cost of living increases. In NYC, the teacher’s contract expired in 2009, thus no significant salary increases have occurred since then. Furthermore, step increases are minimal – often resulting in only $17 more a paycheck for an additional year of teaching. The structure of teacher compensation needs to be modified.

Teachers are at all different skill levels. Some teachers take on more responsibility and have a heavier workload than others. There needs to be an incentive to keep good teachers in the classroom and encourage less effective teachers to improve. The teaching profession needs to continue to attract and hire more highly qualified teachers. Incentives and bonuses can help to achieve this. In every profession, there are some people who are better than others. The same is true in education. There are more effective teachers and less effective teachers. When collaborating, there is often a teacher or team of teachers who take a lead role. All too often, there is a teacher who does not pull his weight. The person not fulfilling his role does not deserve the same financial compensation as the teacher getting the job done. A financial incentive could encourage less effective teachers to “pull their weight” while rewarding the efficient teacher for fulfilling their responsibilities.

The variety of skills required, student needs and conditions in the teaching profession should be factored into teacher compensation. Few teachers could conceive of teaching a kindergarten class, where patience is more than a virtue. Likewise few elementary level teachers would want to be placed in a room full of high school seniors. And even fewer teachers volunteer to be in fifth or sixth grade. Totally different skill sets are needed for each of these tasks. In addition, the team dynamic needs to be factored into every differentiated teacher compensation system.
Proposed Solutions

14. The current step system should stay in place; however a bonus structure should be added for surpassing certain attainable performance thresholds to provide incentive and to reward effective teachers. Clearly we need to start with an equitable, livable base pay system.

15. Secondary teachers who teach standardized tested subjects and who advance student test scores should have the opportunity to receive a bonus. Individual bonuses should be made available for teachers who help students grow on these standardized tests. Elementary success is much more of a team effort and the whole school should receive a bonus when the school meets or exceeds certain standards.

16. Bonuses for teachers of subjects without standardized tests should be offered when a school as a team achieves certain schoolwide success. Student achievement is ultimately the result of work of a team of adults—principal, instructional leaders, classroom teachers, other specialists. When demonstrable schoolwide gains in student achievement are attained, all who contributed to the success should be compensated.

17. Bonuses can be used to reward excellence and reinforce the professional status of teachers. Teachers who are consistently effective with most of their students should have the opportunity to earn salaries comparable to private sector professionals. Once an effective evaluation process is in place, it needs to be tied to teacher compensation.

Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching

Teaching is a career and a calling. We enter into the field with our eyes wide open, knowing that we will not ever be paid on a similar scale to our friends in banking, law, medicine, or other white-collar professions. Despite the knowledge that we can expect only a small increase in salary with each year of experience, skilled, motivated professionals continue to enter the profession. Why? Because, like other professionals, we are motivated by other measures of our value. As teachers, the knowledge that we are helping our students grow academically and socially keeps people entering and remaining in the field.

Nevertheless, the profession needs to promote both individual excellence and the collaboration that is indispensable to effective teaching. It is time to recognize that we should promote and reward excellence in the teaching profession and some individuals work best when given financial incentives. Some sort of bonus structure is essential.
Social Media and Technology: Supporting Teachers, Teaching and Student Achievement

Further Development of Technology Platforms Will Improve Teaching and Learning

The MET research makes clear that technology not only plays a vital part in how students learn, but in how educators can reflect, refine and implement new teaching practices from something as simple as a video of a lesson to creating new ways for teachers to share, communicate, and reflect with each other. These recommended initiatives will be dedicated to taking this initial research a step further by exploring how technology can impact all aspects of effective teaching from building new databases for lessons and teacher-produced videos to creating new professional development opportunities through social media networks and how it will all ultimately impact student achievement.

While our reflections and these initiatives focus on the educator and advancing the teaching profession, it is impossible to address the idea of measuring teacher effectiveness without taking the time to consider the students. Today’s students are technologically savvy thrill seekers in search of the next reality show to follow and discuss via Facebook, Twitter, or whatever other social media outlet is trending at the moment. As educators, we are responsible for creating this excitement within our classrooms. Failure to do so leads to decreased levels of student engagement, low performance and interest in Core classes, and too many students who are ill-equipped to be globally competitive. It is our desire to give a clearer picture of what the MET experience has taught us, where we, as educators, stand on technology and what we see as the next steps needed to integrate it even more within our professional lives and those of our students.

INITIATIVE SIX

Develop a nationwide, searchable, digital database of K–12 Common Core Standard-focused lesson ideas, resources and models of effective teaching aligned to the Core.

Statement of the Problem

As a vast majority of states around the country begin to fully implement the Common Core Standards, the time to fully embrace the changing landscape of education and to begin sharing the best ways to raise our student engagement and achievement is upon us. Historically, teaching resources, lesson ideas and quality interactive materials have been accessible and shared within small circles of teachers, limiting the collective brainpower behind the resources and the quantity of educators who could access them.
Even as the world begins to shrink in size, borrowing ideas from other schools, districts, or from around the country hasn’t been feasible because the system was unaligned and educators were teaching different subjects and by different methods depending on where they were in the country. Until now.

Making quality resources available to the vast majority of American educators requires large-scale solutions. Resource limitations, variations across grades, subject matters and geography, and the need to constantly update our knowledge base makes this task even broader. Yet, the value to our society is immeasurable. We believe nonprofit or public solutions are required to maximize the success of using technology as the means to the end of more effective teaching and higher levels of student learning. Now is the time to develop a true nationwide, collaborative effort to have a wealth of resources at our fingertips.

**Proposed Solutions**

18. Reach out to Common Core adopted states and districts, for-profit companies, and nonprofit organizations to propose networking already established lesson and resource databases together for a nationwide comprehensive and searchable portal for educators.

19. Develop a nationwide video database of effective teaching practices, continuing the research of the Measures of Effective Teaching project and build it in as a complementary component to this proposed nationwide educator portal.

**Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching**

As the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation noted in the “Feedback for Better Teaching” report, “One of the most exciting prospects is aligning teacher development and evaluation systems to the Common Core State Standards” (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). Our experience in the MET Research Project and the concurrent development of a national Common Core Standard puts us at a singular juncture to influence the future of education using what we already know about effective teaching practices. Although we focus less on the evaluation of this teacher in this proposed initiative, high quality instruction as well as student engagement and achievement all are impacted by the rigor of instruction. Providing teachers with this valuable database will give them just what they need to reach their students—access to high quality lessons and resources and videos to show them how to effectively deliver that lesson. These vital resources for planning instruction will match the high expectations by which teachers today, and tomorrow will be evaluated and what it will take to ensure our students achieve.
INITIATIVE SEVEN

Create or partner with an existing social media company or organization to develop an interactive, cross-platform, social media network dedicated to educators and combine it with a nationwide K–12 Common Core lesson database and effective teaching practice library to create new and effective professional development opportunities for educators.

Statement of the Problem

Educators, like the rest of the world, have embraced social media, and it has become a necessary and vital part of their personal lives. We need to tap into these burgeoning social media tools to open networks to high-quality teaching, peer support and professional development. As the Common Core and other policies increase alignment across districts from one coast to the other, there are new opportunities to use social media to build professional peer connections for teachers.

As educators, we often feel isolated from peers and constrained by our classroom activities. Social media cannot only help teachers access information more quickly but can help us evaluate its quality more rapidly. Currently, a lot of time is wasted searching through all of the resources we can access with technology.

Technology can also improve mandated professional development and licensure renewals. We face too many one-size-fits-all professional development options now; sessions fail to pique our interests or meet the needs of individual teachers. As a result most of us have experienced professional development sessions that are extremely boring, fail to provide what was promised, and feel like a major waste of time.

Proposed Solutions

20. Develop an educator-focused, cross-platform, social media network in isolation or as an extension of an already proven social media network (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Edmodo, Pinterest)

21. Utilize these already proven channels of social communication to link a national lesson database/portal (Reflection Eight) with this interactive forum where an open, collaborative opportunity aligns seamlessly with the suggested Common Core resources, strategies, lessons, and videos of effective teaching, through a blog-like, cross-platform, social media application

22. Utilize these social media professional development opportunities and communication forums to build "buy-in" and shift the nationwide culture of educators toward acceptance of evaluation through a forum of positivity, mutual support, and peer/self reflection of teaching and learning practices
Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching

As teacher volunteers in the MET research, we experienced what’s described in research reports: “many of the teachers who participated in the MET project video study told us that seeing themselves teach was one of their most valuable professional development experiences.” Our proposed solutions regarding technology are grounded on the idea that reflecting on your teaching and discussing it with your peers through various channels is a valuable means of professional growth. We see social media as a way to add even more value to our use of video and reviews of our own lessons and help more educators improve their practice.

Twitter stands out as an especially promising social media platform for professional development. We think it holds special promise for middle or high school teachers because of its immediacy and the high energy required in many subjects. While the Internet has changed classrooms forever in regards to access to information, Twitter and other social media have created an avenue for instant access to pertinent information. For elementary teachers Twitter can provide that same kind of information access, but also the opportunity to reflect with other teachers in the same situation over lessons and applications of lessons. We know that even the Huffington Post last August discussed the promise of Twitter for professional development. We think developing the full potential of social media for professional development should be a high priority.

Sometimes it’s difficult to take a written idea and put it into action, but actually seeing it in action allows the learner to determine whether or not it will satisfy their need. Technology is the key to overcoming this hurdle in the teaching profession. We believe the proposals we suggested will create that peer collaboration that is vital for teaching. These are cost-effective strategies to open new connections for vast numbers of teachers without unduly disrupting our time with students.
INITIATIVE EIGHT

Increase access and use of technological hardware and software in K–12 classrooms nationwide.

Statement of the Problem

Although guided technology for instruction was not a direct focus of the MET research, we think developing a stronger understanding of its correlation to student performance is a high priority. Why? Because we think guided technology in the classroom may address the problems of low student engagement and communication. As we expand the number of measures of our own effectiveness, we need to develop new strategies to improve our work with students on all these measures.

Proposed Solutions

23. Develop a study to get a better understanding of what quantities and type (platform, etc.) or combination of technologies are needed, at a minimum, at the levels of elementary, middle and high schools in order to better prepare students for the future.

24. Explore the more economical Bring Your Own Device program to utilize current supply already accessible to students and how it can positively impact achievement in the classroom.

25. Increase and improve student communication and interaction opportunities through classroom, school, district, state, and nationwide social media networks and collaborative applications designed for high student engagement and dedicated to breaking down economic, geographic, and social barriers that may exist.

Why We Think This Will Support Effective Teaching

We must be more creative and more comprehensive in our use of technology in teaching and learning and we believe there should be a link to technology in the hands of every student in every class, nationwide. Think of how often we, as adults, are connected to some form of technology throughout the day while we ask them to spend countless hours per day in the classroom disconnected from the world that we are teaching them about. Is this a realistic request considering the world we live in?

Learning would come to life if students could experience what they are being taught because effective educators know that students learn and retain more by doing. Consider the value of getting firsthand accounts of natural disasters. Imagine the excitement of being able to discuss a book with a student whose life experiences offer a different interpretation of the text. Try to wrap your mind around students teaching and tutoring each other from different parts of the country. Think about how much more meaningful it would be to have face time with an architect who explains how he uses mathematical equations daily to design and construct buildings. These are just some examples of how technology can only enrich the educational experience of students all over our country and the rest of the world.
Many students will never have the means to travel to another country, but providing learning opportunities that minimize the impact of economic barriers would be priceless. These initiatives combine the big ideas of increased resources and experiences with increased communication and support through social media networks, which will positively influence teachers and their instructional practices. We feel that this final reflection, focused on the students, ties together everything we have tried to accomplish with our previous reflections and recommended solutions dedicated to educators.

We believe in a necessary increase in the quality of resources, ideas and examples of great teaching available to teachers and students, especially with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards—giving teachers more opportunities to develop professionally and students more opportunities to learn and experience the real world. We also feel that increasing the accessibility and use of social networking for teachers to develop professionally and students to grow academically will be a vital next step in what we see as a natural extension to the valuable research the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has already delivered with the results of the Measures of Effective Teaching project.

**Further development of technology platforms will improve teaching and learning.**
Conclusion

“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”  – John Dewey

Generally speaking, teachers are visionaries. They work with the belief that they can make a difference in the lives of others. And they give time and energies endlessly into changing what exists today; molding students and the world into something better for tomorrow. Ten of us came together through the MET Project in the last few months to reflect on how our experience changed our own practices and what steps could capitalize on the MET research for all teachers and their students.

We envision a national network of teachers and education professionals that will focus on creating tools and guidance for implementation norms in four major areas: 1) transparency, reliability and alignment of measures of teacher effectiveness/student achievement; 2) increasing teachers’ ability to use data for instruction; 3) financial incentives that reward excellence and 4) dramatically increasing the use of technology for instruction and supporting teaching.

Our reflections are deeply rooted in what we learned about our own effectiveness as teachers. The changes we’ve made in our practices will change the lives of our students today and tomorrow. But as visionaries, the goal is bigger: changing the future. For all teachers and students.

If we...know that we learned more by “doing” work, then we have in fact become more effective teachers and our concentrated efforts evaluating ideas, assessing reflections and working collaboratively through technology can guide others.

If we...scan the verbs most often used in our recommendations, we will see that they call for action: develop, explore, engage, create, provide, utilize, involve.

If we...refine and elevate teaching practices across our country then we have taken steps towards “ensuring that all people have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life” (Working with Teachers to Develop Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching, June 2010).

If we...work together, then establishing Measures of Effective Teaching today will become Measures of Effective Learning tomorrow.
The VIVA MET Teachers Writing Collaborative

Katie Cardus
Teaches middle school math in the New York City Public Schools
Teacher for more than 5 years

Katie always wanted to be an elementary school teacher because “my first grade teacher instilled in me a lifelong passion for learning. However, while in college I fell in love with economics and changed my major. After school I worked as a mortgage underwriter and was shocked at how little some clients knew about interest rates and personal finances. I decided I needed to become a math teacher so I could ensure my students would know the basics of personal finance and be able to pass this knowledge on to their family members.” The student she would have most liked to have had in class is Donald Duck because “his adventures in Mathmagic Land would be an asset to any classroom.”

Nathan Grover
Teaches high school biology in the Denver Public Schools
Teacher for more than 10 years

Nathan became a teacher because, “I love being around people and making an impact. There is something about being on the front lines and making a difference. It can be empowering and humbling all at the same time.” When he isn’t teaching, you can find the new dad “hanging out with my wife and son.” The student he would have most liked to have had in class is Einstein because “brilliance is difficult to nurture. It would have been an awesome challenge.”

Andria Mitchell
Teaches 8th grade language arts, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, N.C.
Teacher for more than 11 years

Andria became a teacher because another teacher told her she’d be good at it. Her first job after graduating from college was as a Youth Development Coordinator at a neighborhood community center. Her job was to coordinate after school programs for middle school students. “I planned programs to ‘trick’ kids into learning and enhancing the skills that were introduced in their core classes. Surprisingly, we had a major increase in the number of students that attended the recreation center, and the academic performance of those students increased substantially. ‘You have a natural knack to teach’, ” I was told. The rest is history. She continues to make learning fun and meaningful for students who might otherwise avoid learning altogether.
Kwesi Ndiziba
Teaches math, pre-K, 1, 2, in District 31, New York City Public Schools
Teacher for more than 10 years
Kwesi became a teacher because his mentor from college directed him into the world of education in early 1996, leading him to start a Master’s in Elementary Education. As he completed his Master’s, Kwesi was fortunate enough to start teaching 4th grade. It was easily one of the most fulfilling professional experiences of his life. He enjoyed working with students and giving back to the community. When he isn’t teaching, Kwesi is reading online news sites, blogs, listening to music, biking or cracking jokes.

Andrew Neale
Teaches 5th grade language arts, math, science, social studies, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, N.C.
Teacher for more than 10 years
Andrew became a teacher after a career in hospital finance. His wife was a 16-year teaching veteran when Andrew joined the profession. “For a totality of reasons, teaching was an obvious path. I don’t regret the choice.” When he isn’t teaching, Andrew is singing, either in a church choir or in a semi-professional choir, or reading. The student he would have most liked to have had in class is Winnie the Pooh: because of his uniquely creative problem solving skills.

Ann Neary
Teaches high school writing in the Bronx for New York City Public Schools
Teacher for more than 5 years
Ann switched careers after 9/11 to become a teacher because the attack made her rethink her choice. “One thing I like doing is interacting with kids, specifically teenagers. Another is reading and writing. So the natural conclusion I came to was to combine my favorite things into a new career: teaching. Each and every day is different and requires attentiveness. I enjoy that challenge.” When she isn’t teaching, you’ll find her playing with her six children, riding horses, walking in the woods, planting forests, baking, sailing, rock climbing, volunteering in her community, reading, writing or drinking coffee.

Melony Smith-Wellington
Teaches 9th grade English/ language arts, Memphis City Schools, Tenn
Teacher for 10 years
Melony became a teacher because, “Teachers had the greatest impact on my life. I truly believe that education is the great equalizer and had it not been for the education I have been blessed to have received, I would not have been afforded the wonderful life that I have today.” When she is not teaching, she is a very busy parent to 4-year-old Paige Noel Wellington, and 2-year-old Antwoine Norquel Wellington II. The student she would have most liked to have had in class is Martin Luther King, Jr., because he was such a powerful human being. “Had it not been for this courageous man’s dream and his endeavors to realize those dreams this world would be a woefully different place.”
Jim Szewc  
Teaches 4th grade (all subjects) in the Hillsborough County, Florida Public Schools  
*Teacher for more than 5 years*

Jim became a teacher because “after spending my 20s helping to launch an online auction company as a college student and then trying my luck in the agency and management business in Hollywood, I felt that after loving these experiences, my passion and abilities could be applied best in a different role and a different world. As an educator, I felt that I could play an important role in impacting the next generation of learners by helping develop their own passions, push them to create experiences of their own and follow whatever it is they believe in. To me, this makes a career as an educator enriching, rewarding, and one of the ways I hope to be remembered someday.” The student he would have most liked to have in his class would have been Bob Dylan “to help him embrace his gift and help him realize that his ideas, words, and later, songs, could bring people of all walks of life together and impact millions for generations in the future. That would have not only been personally rewarding, but a testament to the true role and value of the teacher.”

Kelly Waller  
Teaches middle school language arts for the Hillsborough County, Florida Public Schools  
*Teacher for more than 10 years*

Kelly became a teacher because, “After five years, the company I worked for downsized and I had to look for an alternative career. Everybody always said that I should become a teacher, and then the opportunity was given to me. I became a teacher because I thought I would be able to make a difference in the lives of students. I wanted to be able to educate through fun lessons, as well as teach life lessons.” The student she would have most liked to have had in class is Justin Bieber “because my daughter would then think my job was cool.”

Zaneta Williams  
Teaches middle school reading in the Dallas Public Schools  
*Teacher for more than 5 years*

Zaneta became a teacher at the urging of her mother. “She was a teacher, and I began to work as a substitute teacher at her school. She kept telling me I had a natural knack for teaching. So I did other things, but I kept coming back to education. I felt free in the classroom. The students needed so much, not just in terms of what I could teach them from books, but what I felt I had to offer in terms of character development, focus and direction. I have had a few difficult lessons in my life, and I wanted to help students to find their purpose earlier than I did, and to know the value of an education.” The student she would have most liked to have in class is her grandmother because, “I am told she was a forward thinker who always said what she thought, and was full of wit. I would have loved to have seen her in the midst of today’s youth, and would have loved to have witnessed her wisdom in action as a young person at my school, in my classroom.”
Index of Proposed Initiatives
Based on Our Experience as Teacher Volunteers
in the MET Research

INITIATIVE ONE
Teacher Performance Should Have a Higher Weighting Than Students’ Standardized Test Scores in All Evaluation Circumstances. Teacher Evaluations Have to Focus on Classroom Activities, and We Need to Build the Capacity Necessary to Use Multiple Measures of Teachers’ Work

Proposed Solutions

1. The norm for the percentage of a teacher’s evaluation weighted to students’ standardized tests should be 33%. And, more investment is needed in refining standardized student assessments.

2. Principal and peer observations should both be used as part of the teacher evaluation process. The principal’s evaluation should have higher weight than that of other observers.

3. Video recording of classroom instruction should be the norm in the teacher evaluation process.

4. Self-evaluation should be a regular component of a teacher’s evaluation, and should inform professional development plans.

INITIATIVE TWO
Classroom Teachers Should have a Regular, Active and Direct Role in Crafting The Standards For Effective Teaching and The Process For Teacher Evaluations

Proposed Solutions

5. Create an evaluation community of teachers (who may be elected by their peers) and administrators to design the evaluation. Use transparent, objective criteria to articulate the qualification benchmarks for teachers who serve in this role.

6. District-wide evaluation communities will produce more consistency and create a greater sense of community across the school district.

7. Multiple years of evaluation should be considered at each annual teacher evaluation.

INITIATIVE THREE
Student or Parent Surveys Can Provide Useful Information About Classroom Practice. However, Surveys Need to be Used Differently Depending on Grade Level

Proposed Solution

8. Student and parent surveys have relevance to teachers’ evaluation. The relative weight given should be adjusted based on grade level. The scale should work in opposite weight, giving parents more weight in elementary school and students more weight in middle and high school.

Continued on next page...
INITIATIVE FOUR

**Student Formative Feedback Should Be Regular and Informed by the Data Collected About Their Teachers’ Effectiveness**

**Proposed Solutions**

9. Professional development for administrators and teachers focusing on the importance of creation and implementation of formative assessments should be improved expanded and linked to teachers’ evaluations.

10. All schools should use technology to create and use data collected for a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan.

11. Dedicated time should be built into the school calendar to allow teachers to unpack data, understand implications for student learning outcomes, and to establish targeted interventions.

12. Increased investments are needed to improve teachers’ formative assessment practices and add formative assessment experts to a school staff.

13. Increase collaboration by learning communities that focus on district, team, and individual formative assessment, so that the data collected can be used in and across schools as they develop ways to respond to their students.

INITIATIVE FIVE

**Compensation and Teaching Performance Need Alignment**

**Proposed Solutions**

14. A bonus system should be added to the current step compensation system.

15. Individual bonuses are more effective and should be used more frequently in high schools. School-wide bonuses should be the norm in elementary schools because student achievement in elementary school requires specialized teamwork.

16. Bonuses for teachers of non-tested subjects should be offered when a school as a team achieves certain schoolwide success.

17. Bonuses can be used to reward excellence and reinforce the professional status of teachers. They should be substantial. Teachers who are consistently effective with most of their students should have the opportunity to earn salaries comparable to private sector professionals.

INITIATIVE SIX

**Develop a Nationwide, Searchable, Digital Database of K–12 Common Core Standard-Focused Lesson Ideas, Resources and Models of Effective Teaching Aligned to the Core**

**Proposed Solutions**

18. Establish a nationwide database of Common Core Standard resources available to any teacher in any classroom.

19. Develop a nationwide video database of effective teaching practices, linked to this proposed nationwide educator portal.

Continued on next page...
INITIATIVE SEVEN

Develop an Interactive, Cross-Platform, Social Media Network Dedicated to Educators to Create a New Delivery System for Professional Development

20. Develop an educator-focused, cross-platform, social media network.

21. Utilize these already proven channels of social communication to link a national lesson database/portal (Initiative Eight) with this interactive forum.

22. Utilize these social media professional development opportunities and communication forums to build “buy-in” and shift the nationwide culture of educators toward acceptance of evaluation.

INITIATIVE EIGHT

Increase Access and Use of Technological Hardware and Software in K–12 Classrooms Nationwide

23. Develop a study to explore the quantities and type or combination of technologies that maximize instructional effectiveness for all grade levels.

24. Explore economical strategies to make sure each student has his own technology in the classroom.

25. Use technology, especially social media, to increase and improve student communication and interaction opportunities.
New Voice Strategies

New Voice Strategies is a non-profit corporation founded by Elizabeth Evans and Tom Cosgrove. New Voice Strategies created WikiWisdom™ to offer leaders a new way to communicate with their stakeholders. Our innovation—the VIVA Idea Exchange, an online peer collaboration platform—plumbs the wisdom of committed people with front-line experience to create consensus on a variety of actionable recommendations. We believe in the power of authentic experience and provide passionate people with an avenue to make a difference.

Our passion is to make their voices heard. In its first year of operation, VIVA Teachers has engaged 2,500 committed classroom teachers in peer-to-peer collaborations. Along with 1,000 of their peers who joined our network, VIVA Teachers offers unvarnished insights into professional visions and priorities for strengthening America’s public schools from coast to coast.

Board of Directors

JILL BASS taught in the Chicago and New York City public schools for 14 years. She has a master’s in instructional leadership from the University of Illinois at Chicago and has been a professional developer, curriculum writer, educational consultant, and instructional coach. She is currently director of the Mikva Challenge’s National Center for Action Civics, overseeing curriculum development and teacher training.

ELIZABETH EVANS, founding CEO, is a recognized national leader in building unconventional alliances and bringing innovative approaches to solving difficult policy problems. For the last decade, her work has focused on education reform, and she has spent her career promoting the interests of children. She was executive director of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), where she was the chief architect of a successful statewide campaign that culminated with Illinois being the first state in the nation to enact comprehensive charter law reforms in 2009. Before joining INCS, Elizabeth was part of the Illinois Facilities Fund leadership team, where her responsibilities focused on Illinois government relations, communications, and advocacy. Elizabeth also worked at the Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago and was a political organizer in Washington, DC, and Michigan. She practiced law from 1990 to 1998 for the US Securities and Exchange Commission Enforcement Division and was a staff attorney in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

JOHN HUSSEY is Chief Strategy Officer at Battelle for Kids. John provides organizational and strategic oversight for Battelle for Kids and the organization’s clients in the area of innovation, technology, communications, development and strategic planning. Prior to joining Battelle for Kids, John enjoyed a 30-year career in education and technology. He previously served as the regional manager for SchoolNet, Inc., helping create Web-based products to help teachers access student data and curricular standards via the Internet for use in instructional planning. He was also a middle school science teacher and technology coordinator in several Ohio school districts.

KIPLUND “KIP” KOLKMEIER is of counsel to the Political Law and Government Relations practice groups of Perkins, Coie, LLC & Kolkmeier Consulting. His legal practice focuses on state legislative lobbying in Illinois, corporate and governmental ethics issues, administrative rule making and executive agency lobbying, PAC management, state and federal campaign finance issues, and association management. He previously was a partner at the following law firms: Sidley & Austin, Altheimer & Gray, and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon.

ASHLEY WARLICK, Chair, teaches elementary school in the Cambridge, MA Public Schools. She has a concentration in teaching students with special needs and brings a strong interest in the arts to her work. She serves on the Board of Directors of her school’s affiliated nonprofit organization, which brings urgently needed resources to the students at the school.