

2009 Year in Review

January 2010

Dear Friends:

What began as a vision to close the literacy gap for disadvantaged youth has set the pace for the evolution of the use of technology in public schools throughout our 15-year history. Today Teaching Matters is committed to ensuring that all students meet high standards through the integration of 21st Century tools and approaches in the day-to-day essentials of education including curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school management. In 2009 nearly 80,000 young people from 200 schools have accomplished extraordinary things – many in the most impoverished areas – because you joined forces with our organization.

Teaching Matters is at the center of innovation for student success. Through our Partnership for School Innovation we deliver new models for collaboration and sophisticated yet easy-to-apply solutions that enhance school capacity while scaling our own initiatives more quickly, efficiently, and cost effectively. The Partnership's enriched package of programs and services include The Innovative Principal (creating a lasting shift in pedagogy and leadership towards 21st Century achievement), The Innovative Teacher (tailoring instruction), Writing Matters (literacy for digital natives), Voices and Choices (next generation citizenship) Using Data for Meaningful Change (professional support for inquiry, assessment driven instruction), and Technovations (open source solutions for innovation and savings), among others.

Our organization is regarded as a leader among the new architects of public education. To date, we have worked with more than half of New York City's 1,600 schools. Those who have been highly successful in demonstrating standardized English Language Arts (ELA) gains – from PS 129 in West Harlem to Icahn Charter in the South Bronx – have taken hold of Writing Matters. Others seeking to establish professional learning communities to improve math achievement, such as MS 217 in Queens and PS 65 in The Bronx, have been drawn to Using Data for Meaningful Change. In all of our programming, and for an ever larger network of schools, we are committed to serving as an engine of growth by delivering the educational benefits of technology in the most effective way.

Teaching Matters is proud of its 2009 performance. Our most important accomplishments are outlined in the attached Year in Review.

Teaching Matters is committed to helping urban schools advance visions, build capacity, and demonstrate results so that students may succeed in the digital age. For us, the future is now. As social entrepreneurs, our objective is to constantly explore, innovate, and refine programming in order to make the goal of student success achievable and sustainable. As leaders, our responsibility is to be collaborative and inclusive – ensuring that multiple voices are heard as the course is set for the future of learning and that equitable access is made to its rewards.

Looking ahead, Teaching Matters will continue to work with our partners to merge real-world goals, best educational practices, and state-of-the-art technology in order to enhance learning in new and meaningful ways.

We look forward to sharing this journey with you.

Sincerely,
Lynette Guastaferrero
Executive Director

Completion and widespread implementation of Writing Matters, a first-rate middle school literacy curriculum that takes full advantage of education research and multimedia resources.

After three years of incredible effort, the Writing Matters curriculum is now complete and has received rave reviews. This represents one of Teaching Matters' most important achievements! At the core of this \$2 million initiative are seven instructional units that can each be used alone, in a series, or as part of a yearlong curriculum: Mastering the Essentials, Writing Editorials, Writing Memoir, Writing Poetry, Writing Short Fiction, Writing Feature Articles, and Response to Literature. Writing Matters also includes a teacher website that has been organized by these genres with high quality lessons and other instructional resources (such as exciting animations and interactive tutorials) to skillfully develop student writing. In addition, the program has a free Internet tool that gives students the opportunity to publish and discuss their work in electronic magazines (or e-zines). At present, an estimated 37,500 students are publishing online from 40 states. All of Writing Matters' instructional components are supported by intensive professional development including full-day institutes as well as onsite teacher mentoring and coaching. To date, the core program has been delivered to nearly one in five New York City middle schools.

Introduction of The Innovative Principal, a three-pronged approach to connect administrators to a citywide learning community around best educational practices and 21st Century instructional tools.

The Innovative Principal is a centerpiece of our Partnership for School Innovation, which brings together schools committed to pursuing new visions for achievement and turning them into reality. Through the program we partner with leaders to identify areas of need within their school learning environments and determine the most viable and effective pathways to innovate for success. Key components include: (1) Innovation Roadmaps where state-of-the-art research, development, assessment tools and aligned curriculum resources are applied and refined in accordance with school needs, priorities, and achievement goals; (2) Innovation Forums where principals can learn and share about 21st Century models of school leadership, study and discuss technology integration demonstrations, and access other resources and materials that support excellence; and (3) Innovation Field Trips where principals and their instructional teams can observe frontline innovation in model schools, participate in debrief sessions, and learn how to apply essential elements.

Rollout of Using Data for Meaningful Change, an inquiry based, assessment driven professional development model that supports city-wide achievement in math.

In order to strengthen our ability to support broad scale improvements in local schools, over the course of the year we developed an alliance with TERC – a nationally recognized nonprofit education research and development organization dedicated to improving math, science, and technology teaching and learning. As a result, Teaching Matters has been authorized as the only organization that can scale use of TERC's Using Data for Meaningful Change (UDMC) program model in New York City. We conducted our first UDMC institute with four schools just before the start of 2009 – customizing delivery of the program to enable participants to learn the collaborative inquiry model using their city-specific data systems. We also initiated a project that will scale, refine, and evaluate UDMC in support of math achievement. Schools can send teams of five teachers and administrators to a six-day institute. Participants will build school leadership and math instructional capacity, establish professional learning communities around math improvement, and use data to positively impact

Advancement of visionary change in response to the evolving needs of the New York City public school system.

Creating tomorrow's schools today requires major investment. During Fiscal Year 2009, we invested close to \$3 million to innovate for student success. We also worked tirelessly to ensure that the role of technology in local schools evolves beyond that of infrastructure to a wellspring for delivering rigorous and highly responsive learning experiences. Our strategic vision has been to transform New York City's schools into hubs of innovation and success. As a testament to this, Elizabeth Rohatyn, Founder and Chairman Emerita, was honored in the Fall to receive recognition for the full span of our work by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Chancellor Joel Klein, Barbara Walters, Joan Ganz Cooney (Founder of Sesame Street), Maggie Williams (former manager of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign), and Amanda Urban (renowned literary agent).

Continued demonstration of the impact of our programs and services through data and evaluation.

Teaching Matters has evolved our organizational work into a formalized and replicable model for educational improvement. We engage in ongoing assessment of teacher and student experiences for all of our key programs. We also completed our third and final year of Writing Matters evaluation which was conducted by the Education Development Center's Center for Children and Technology. Results showed a significant difference in gains in writing ability among struggling students who participated in Writing Matters vs. a comparison group.



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