NWP Retains Teachers in Teaching and Has a Lasting Impact. Data collected through NWP’s Legacy Study, which surveyed 5,512 individuals who participated in Invitational Institutes between 1974 and 2006, demonstrates that 77% of teachers remain in the classroom for at least two years following the Invitational Institute and 97% remain in the field of education. On average, teachers who participate in the Invitational Institute teach for 22.7 years.

Additional evidence to support NWP’s role in retaining teachers comes from an independent, quasi-experimental study comparing teachers participating in Courage to Teach (CTT) with National Writing Project teachers, in which NWP teachers served as the counterfactual. This study found that NWP teachers had slightly higher levels of professional engagement on two indicators of the Malasch Burnout Inventory than CTT teachers ($d=0.12$). Further, descriptive analyses showed that NWP teachers planned to remain in teaching, with not a single respondent planning to leave the profession as soon as possible and only 3.3% of the sample saying they would leave if a better opportunity emerged (Geil, 2011).

The Legacy Study revealed that teachers view the NWP as having an enduring impact on their teaching and work in education. Across all reported positions ($n=4,841$), 88.3% reported being influenced by their Writing Project experience, 89.2% reported drawing on Writing Project knowledge and skills, and 90.6% indicated that the Writing Project attitudes and values continued to influence their work.

NWP Prepares and Engages Teachers in Leadership Roles. Writing Project participants who leave the classroom go on to play a variety of leadership roles in education with 3.2% becoming school administrators, 3.1% playing district leadership roles, and 11% working higher education, often in teacher education. Qualitative analysis of interviews with a random sample of 18 Legacy survey, principal respondents demonstrates that the Writing Project influenced three components of respondents’ instructional leadership: bringing a focus on and vision for the teaching of writing, emphasizing and creating opportunities for professional development that reflect Writing Project values, and supervising teachers (Friedrich, 2009). Investment in the development of teacher-leaders through the Writing Project can therefore come to serve schools and districts more broadly over time.

NWP Programs Contribute to Growth in Student Writing Achievement. Over the past 8 years, the National Writing Project has conducted a coordinated program of research to examine the impact of its work on teachers’ classroom practice and student writing performance. NWP worked closely with local Writing Project sites to frame a series of 19 quasi-experimental studies, 17 of which examine inservice programs provided by NWP teacher-leaders. Independent evaluation consultants, who played no role in leading the programs, conducted the analyses of all student outcome data. In addition, NWP has contracted with SRI International to conduct a longitudinal, multi-site cluster randomized trial to be completed in March 2012. Proposed new research (section D) will investigate the magnitude of results of the proposed SEED program.

Evidence of Effectiveness in Secondary Programs. At the high school level, one experimental and four quasi-experimental studies support the effectiveness of teacher-led inservice for teachers and schools serving substantial proportions of high-need students. All five studies show statistically significant differences in growth in student writing performance, with effect sizes ranging from .32 to .81. These small to moderate effect sizes are comparable to those reported in

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1 The Legacy Study professional history survey was conducted in two stages. The first round, fielded in 2004, surveyed teachers who participated between 1974 and 1994. The second round, fielded in 2007, surveyed teachers who participated between 1995 and 2005. Thus, final positions reported on the survey were held for at least two years after teachers’ participation in an Invitational Institute.
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*Writing Next* (Graham & Perin, 2007), a meta-analysis of experimental and quasi-experimental studies on elements of writing instruction, such as collaborative writing (\(d=.75\)), pre-writing (\(d=.32\)), process writing approach (\(d=.32\)), and study of models (\(d=.25\)). These elements of writing instruction are often the focus of NWP’s professional development efforts.

*Santa Ana Unified School District, California.* A multisite cluster randomized controlled trial of a cognitive strategies approach to teaching text-based analytical writing for mainstreamed Latino English language learners (ELLs) took place in the Santa Ana Unified School district, where 78% of students are low-income (Kim, Olson, Scarcella, Kramer, Pearson, van Dyk, Collins, & Land, 2011). The study involved 9 middle and 6 high schools; 103 English teachers stratified by school and grade were randomly assigned to the Pathway Project professional development intervention or control group. The Pathway Project, conducted by the University of California Irvine Writing Project site, draws on well-documented instructional frameworks that emphasize a cognitive strategies approach to support students’ English language development. Pathway teachers participated in 46 hours of training and learned how to apply cognitive strategies by using an on-demand writing assessment to help students understand, interpret, and write analytical essays about literature. Multilevel models revealed significant effects on an on-demand writing assessment (\(d=.35\)) and the California Standards Test in English language arts (\(d=0.07\)).

*California Statewide Program.* The effectiveness of the California Writing Project’s Improving Students’ Academic Writing (ISAW) program (Marlink & Wahleithner, 2011) was examined in a 2-year study with high school teachers from Los Angeles, greater Sacramento, and rural northern California. The program seeks to improve the achievement of traditionally non-college bound students through teacher professional development focused on instructional approaches to teaching analytical writing and critical reading. The six high schools in the first year of the study served student populations in which 61 to 100% were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) and 3% to 44% were designated as English Language Learners (ELL). Teachers participated in 60 hours of professional development; between pre- and post-professional development, program students’ holistic scores increased by .57, while comparison students’ holistic scores increased by .24; the difference was statistically significant (\(p<.05\)), with an effect size of .48.

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2 The description of this study is drawn from the abstract in Kim, et al., 2011.
3 Student writing samples for all studies except Kim, et al., 2011, were scored independently at national scoring events using NWP’s Analytic Writing Continuum (AWC) Assessment System. AWC scoring provides a holistic score, representing a single summary judgment, along with scores of six attributes (Content, Structure, Stance, Sentence Fluency, Diction, and Conventions). All identifying information including students’ name, time of year, program or comparison condition, and geographic location are removed from the writing samples prior to scoring in order to reduce the possibility of scorer bias. Scorers are all expert teachers of writing, who have participated in NWP Invitational Institutes, but have no role in the programs being evaluated. 4 Effect sizes, except for Kim, et al., 2011, are calculated based on analyses reported by the studies’ authors using Hedge’s \(g\) as advised by the What Works Clearinghouse (What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook, version 2.1. Retrieved from [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference_resources/wwc_procedures_v2_1_standards_handbook.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference_resources/wwc_procedures_v2_1_standards_handbook.pdf)).
In the study’s second year, participation in the program and the study narrowed to 11th and 12th grade teachers in two Greater Sacramento area high schools serving student populations in which 69 to 100% were eligible for FRPL and 30 to 44% of students were designated as ELLs. In the second year, teachers participated in 11 full day and 4 afternoon professional development sessions. Differences between pre and post holistic scores for the program students equaled .16, while differences between pre and post holistic scores for comparison students scores dropped by a similar amount (-.15), resulting in a statistically significant difference at the p<.05 level in favor of the Writing Project students and an effect size of .32.

New York City. Three studies of the New York City Writing Project (NYCWP) focused on inservice partnerships with high schools, in which the NYCWP works intensively with schools for at least 2 years, offering on-site consultation with teachers 1-4 days per week and 45 hours of afterschool, graduate seminars. The work engages teachers in the study of the theory and practice of writing, exploration of aspects of the writing process, and enactment of practices and ideas with students. The first two studies examined NYCWP’s work with 6 high schools at which 64 to 95% of the students were FRPL eligible and between 12 to 91% of students were classified as ELLs. In the first study program students’ holistic scores increased by .5, while comparison students’ holistic scores decreased by .3; the difference was statistically significant (p<.01) with an effect size of 0.51 (Campos & Peach, 2006). In the second study, conducted at the same schools, differences in holistic scores were non-significant, although trends favored program students (Campos & Peach, 2007).

The third study was a mixed-methods, single case design to examine how the NYCWP worked in partnership with a high poverty school (54% of students were FRPL eligible) (Campos & Peach, 2008). Here the researchers compared writing growth among students who experienced low, medium, and high exposure to teachers with varying levels of participation in NYCWP professional development. Relative to their peers in low and moderate exposure groups combined, high exposure group students’ scores increased by 1.29 points; these differences were statistically significant (p =.01) with an effect size of .81.

Mississippi Statewide Program. This study examined the effects of 36 hours of professional development provided to 9th grade teachers in two high schools, one in a rural area and one near a small population center (Swain, Graves, & Morse, 2006). These schools, with 64% and 95% FRPL-eligible populations comprised of 81% and 99% African American youth, were each matched with two comparison schools on economic, ethnic, school expenditure, and prior performance factors. Teachers participated in interactive workshops, study groups, coaching, and classroom demonstrations focused on improving writing. Differences between pre and post holistic scores for the program students’ holistic scores increased by .5 point between pre and post intervention, while comparison students’ holistic scores increased by .1 point; this difference was highly significant (p <.001), with an effect size of .59.

Additional secondary studies. Four additional studies showed primarily positive, yet non-significant differences on holistic scores (Lannin & Franklin, 2008; Singer & Scollay, 2009; Wickstrom, Patterson, & Araujo, 2010). Across 10 studies focused on high-need secondary students, including one randomized experiment, evidence points to the positive effects of teachers’ participation in Writing Project professional development on students’ growth in

\[5\] Wickstrom, Patterson, & Araujo (2010) found that middle school students in comparison classrooms demonstrated higher gains than their peers in program classrooms, with gains in two attributes being statistically significant. These are the only contrasts across 19 studies in which the comparison group outperformed the program group.
writing achievement. These results point to the potential for NWP’s inservice programs in high-need secondary schools to make a difference in students’ writing performance.

**Evidence of Effectiveness in Elementary and Middle School Programs.** Like the studies of NWP’s work at the secondary level, quasi-experimental studies of NWP’s work in elementary schools show positive effects. Three studies in diverse regions of the country demonstrated moderate effects of .36 to .40, which are in line with meta-analyses of classroom practices and formative assessment practices that are shown to have moderate to large impacts (Graham, Harris, & Hebert, 2011; Graham & Perin, 2007).

**St. Louis County, Missouri.** This study examined the effects of an intensive 45 hour teacher-inquiry program that sought to build a core group of teacher-leaders who could develop and sustain a literacy improvement model for grades 3-5 (Singer & Scollay, 2006). The study focused on predominately African American students (82 program and 78 comparison, of whom 54% and 37% were FRPL-eligible respectively), with similar baseline Gates McGinitie reading test scores. Program students’ holistic scores increased by .48, while comparison students’ holistic scores dropped slightly (-.03); this difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$), with an effect size of .40. In addition, the Writing Project students’ reading ability over the year grew at a significantly faster rate than that of the comparison students.

**Mississippi Suburban/Rural.** This study involved 3rd–5th grade teachers (Swain, Graves & Morse, 2007) working in two schools with similar accreditation levels, prior test scores, and demographics (including at least 50% FRPL-eligible students), but located in different areas of the state. The 34-hour professional development program focused on strategies for teaching a variety of positive features in writing, augmented by model responses to student writing. Between pre and post intervention, program students’ writing improved on all 6 analytic attributes as well as on the holistic score, which increased by .7 point. In contrast, comparison students experienced no change in their holistic scores. The difference was significant ($p < .001$), with an effect size of .48.

**Greenville, South Carolina.** This study involved a quasi-experimental design for studying a 3rd–5th grade writing program (Kaminski, Hunt-Barron, Hawkins & Williams, 2010). Pre and post qualitative indicators, including classroom video data, were collected to determine the influence of a 30-hour professional development program on teachers’ philosophies and practices for teaching writing. Student writing performance was determined by pre and post on-demand writing samples and augmented by pre and post samples of portfolio pieces written by program students. Program students’ holistic scores increased by 1 point, while comparison students’ scores increased by .58; this difference was significant ($p < .001$), with effect size of .36.

**Additional Elementary and Middle Grades Studies.** Two studies showed positive, but non-significant results, suggesting that Writing Project students outperformed their peers in the comparison groups (Blau, Cabe, & Whitney, 2006, 2007). Only one elementary level quasi-experimental study in South Carolina (Kaminski & Hunt-Barron, 2010) showed mixed, but non-significant results. Overall, in 6 elementary studies, the trend is overwhelmingly in favor of Writing Project teachers’ students. Together these studies demonstrate the National Writing Project’s exceptional potential to promote growth in writing ability among younger students of all backgrounds in multiple, geographical locations.

**Summary of NWP Impact on Student Writing Results.** Of NWP’s 18 experimental and quasi-experimental studies of intensive inservice professional development, 17 focus on NWP’s work with teachers and schools serving concentrations of high-need students. Across these studies
student results are consistent, strong, and favorable in those aspects of writing that the NWP is best known for, such as development of ideas and organization. And, students in Writing Project classrooms gained more often than their peers in the area of conventions, suggesting that basic skills also benefit from the NWP approach to teaching writing (NWP, 2010). In studies with statistically significant results, effect sizes on gains in a holistic measure student writing performance ranged from .32 to .81. These effect sizes are commensurate with those reported in Graham and Perin’s (2007) well-regarded meta-analysis. Collectively, these experimental and quasi-experimental studies, which were designed to support causal inferences, address Competitive Preference 1. They demonstrate the positive impact of NWP’s programs on student writing achievement in high-need schools from different geographic regions, at different grade levels, and in urban, rural, and suburban areas. The effect sizes related to direct measures of student writing achievement lead us to anticipate effect sizes of .25 – .30 in the similar intensive inservice programs proposed below.

These studies show that NWP, with its national scale and network of long-serving teacher-leaders, is well positioned to offer high-quality professional development that will increase the quality of student writing.